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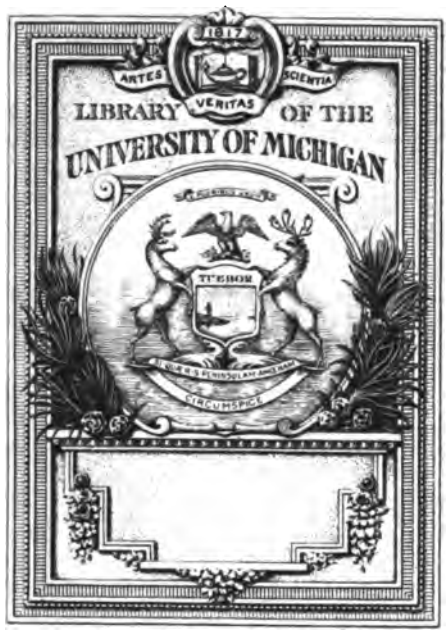
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OR

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THE NORSE KINGS

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BY

SAMUEL LAING, Esq.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED, WITH NOTES

BY

RASMUS B. ANDERSON, LL.D.

UNITED STATES MINISTER TO DENMARK

AUTHOR OF "NORSE MYTHOLOGY," "VIKING TALES OF THE NORTH," AND OTHER WORKS

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THE HEIMSKRINGLA;

OR,

CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY.

IV.

HAKON THE GOOD'S SAGA.

INTRODUCTORY.

Of Eirik Blook-axe's five years' reign Snorre has no separate saga. He appears not to have been beloved by the people. His queen Gunhild seems to have had a bad influence on him.

Other accounts of Hakon may be found in *Fagrskinna* (chaps. 25-34), *Agrip*, *Historia Norvegiæ*, and in *Thjodrek* (chap. 4).

The reader is also referred to *Saxo*, *Egla*, *Laxdæla*, *Kormaks Saga*, *Gisle Surssons Saga*, *Halfred's Saga*, *Floamanna Saga*, *Viga Glums Saga*, and to *Landnamabok*.

Skalds mentioned in this Saga are: — Glum Geirason, Guthorm Sindre, Kormak Ogmundson, and Eyvind Skaldaspiller. In the *Egla* are found many poems belonging to this epoch by Egil Skallagrimson.

In *Fagrskinna* is found a poem (not given by Snorre) which Gunhild (his wife) had made on King Eirik after his death, telling how Odin welcomed him to Valhal. The author or skald who composed it is not known, but it is considered to be one of the gems of old Norse poetry, and we here quote it in Vigfusson's translation in his *Corpus Poeticum*, vol. i. pp. 260, 261. Gudbrand Vigfusson has filled up a few gaps

from *Hakonarmal*, the poem at the end of this Saga. We have changed Vigfusson's orthography of names, and brought them into harmony with the spelling used in this work:—

Odin wakes in the morning and cries, as he opens his eyes, with his dream still fresh in his mind:—What dreams are these? I thought I arose before daybreak to make Valhal ready for a host of slain. I woke up the host of the chosen. I bade them rise up to strew the benches, and to fill up the beer-vats, and I bade valkyries to bear the wine, as if a king were coming. I look for the coming of some noble chiefs from the earth, wherefore my heart is glad.

Brage, Odin's counsellor, now wakes, as a great din is heard without, and calls out:—What is that thundering? as if a thousand men or some great host were tramping on—the walls and the benches are creaking withal—as if Balder was coming back to the hall of Odin?

Odin answers:—Surely thou speakest foolishly, good Brage, although thou art very wise. It thunders for Eirik the king, that is coming to the hall of Odin.

Then turning to his heroes, he cries:—Sigmund and Sinfjotle, rise up in haste and go forth to meet the prince! Bid him in if it be Eirik, for it is he whom I look for.

Sigmund answers:—Why lookest thou more for Eirik, the king, to Odin's hall, than for other kings?

Odin answers:—Because he has reddened his brand, and borne his bloody sword in many a land.

Quoth Sigmund:—Why didst thou rob him, the chosen king of victory, then, seeing thou thoughtest him so brave? . . .

Odin answers:—Because it is not surely to be known, when the grey wolf shall come upon the seat of the god.

SECOND SCENE.—*Without Valhal.*

Sigmund and Sinfjotle go outside the hall and meet Eirik.

Quoth Sigmund:—Hail to thee, Eirik, be welcome here, and come into the hall, thou gallant king! Now I will ask thee, what kings are these that follow thee from the clash of the sword edges?

Eirik answers:—They are five kings; I will tell thee all their names; I myself am the sixth. (*The names followed in the song, whereof the rest is lost.*)

Fagrskinna says *Hakonarmal* was the model of this poem.

CHAPTER I.—*Hakon chosen King.*

Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, was in England at the time [934] he heard of his father King Harald's death, and he immediately made himself ready to depart. King Athelstan gave him men, and a choice of good ships, and fitted him out for his journey most excellently. In harvest time he came to Norway, where he heard of the death of his brothers, and that King Eirik was then in Viken. Then Hakon sailed northwards to Throndhjem, where he went to Sigurd earl of Lade, who was the ablest man in Norway. He gave Hakon a good reception; and they made a league with each other, by which Hakon promised great power to Sigurd if he was made king. They assembled then a numerous Thing, and Sigurd the earl recommended Hakon's cause to the Thing,* and proposed him to the bondes as king. Then Hakon himself stood up and spoke; and the people said to each other, two and two, as they heard him, "Harald Harfager is come again, and grown young." The beginning of Hakon's speech was, that he offered himself to the bondes as king, and desired from them the title of king, and aid and forces to defend the kingdom. He promised, on the other hand, to make all the bondes udal-holders, and give every man udal rights to the land he lived on. This speech met such joyful applause,

* This reference to a Thing appears from the saga to have been necessary, whatever the claim from hereditary right by succession may have been to the kingdom.—L.

that the whole public cried and shouted that they would take him to be king. And so it was that the Throndhjem people took Hakon, who was then fifteen years old, for king; and he took a court or bodyguard, and servants, and proceeded through the country. The news reached the Uplands that the people in Throndhjem had taken to themselves a king, who in every respect was like King Harald Harfager,—with the difference, that Harald had made all the people of the land vassals,* and unfree; but this Hakon wished well to every man, and offered the bondes to give them their udal rights again, which Harald had taken from them. All were rejoiced at this news, and it passed from mouth to mouth,—it flew, like fire in dry grass, through the whole land, and eastward to the land's end. Many bondes came from the Uplands to meet King Hakon. Some sent messages, some tokens; and all to the same effect—that his men they would be: and the king received all thankfully.

CHAPTER II.—*King Hakon's Progress through the Country.*

Early in winter, the king went to the Uplands, and summoned the people to a Thing; and there streamed all to him who could come. He was proclaimed king at every Thing; and then proceeded eastward to Viken, where his brother's sons, Trygve and Gudrod, and many others, came unto him, and

* The policy of Harald Harfager had evidently been to introduce the feudal system into his kingdom, and it failed by his sons requiring their udal right to equal shares in the kingdom.—L.

complained of the sorrow and evil his brother Eirik had wrought. The hatred to King Eirik grew more and more, the more liking all men took to King Hakon; and they got more boldness to say what they thought. King Hakon gave Trygve and Gudrod the title of kings, and the dominions which King Harald had bestowed on their fathers.* Trygve got Ranrike and Vingulmark, and Gudrod, Vestfold; but as they were young, and in the years of childhood, he appointed able men to rule the land for them. He gave them the country on the same conditions as it had been given before,—that they should have half of the scat and revenues with him. Towards spring King Hakon returned north, over the Uplands, to Throndhjem.

CHAPTER III.—*Eirik's Departure from the Country.*

King Hakon, early in spring, collected a great army at Throndhjem, and fitted out ships. The people of Viken also had a great force on foot, and intended to join Hakon. King Eirik also levied people in the middle of the country; but it went badly with him to gather people, for the leading men left him, and went over to Hakon. As he saw himself not nearly strong enough to oppose Hakon, he sailed out to the West sea [935] with such men as would follow him. He first sailed to Orkney, and took many people with him from that country; and then went south towards England, plundering in Scotland,

* Trygve and Gudrod were grandsons of Harald Harfager.—L.

and in the north parts of England, wherever he could land. Athelstan, the king of England, sent a message to Eirik, offering him dominions under him in England; saying that King Harald his father was a good friend of King Athelstan, and therefore he would do kindly towards his sons. Messengers passed between the two kings; and it came to an agreement that King Eirik should take Northumberland as a fief from King Athelstan, and which land he should defend against the Danes or other vikings. Eirik should let himself be baptized, together with his wife and children, and all the people who had followed him. Eirik accepted this offer, and was baptized, and adopted the right faith. Northumberland is called a fifth part of England. Eirik had his residence at York,* where Lodbrok's sons, it was said, had formerly been, and Northumberland was principally inhabited by Northmen. Since Lodbrok's sons had taken the country, Danes and Northmen often plundered there, when the power of the land was out of their hands. Many names of places in the country are Norwegian; as Grimsby,† Haukfliot, and many others.

CHAPTER IV.—*Eirik's Death.*

King Eirik had many people about him, for he kept many Northmen who had come with him from the East; and also many of his friends had joined

* There Egil Skallagrimson met him in 936. See *Egla*, chaps. 62, 63.

† Grimsbær is no doubt Grimsby. Haukfliot is not now the name of any place known generally.—L.

him from Norway. But as he had little land, he went on a cruise every summer, and plundered in Scotland, the Hebrides, Ireland, and Bretland, by which he gathered property. King Athelstan died on a sick bed, after a reign of fourteen years, eight weeks, and three days.* After him his brother Jatmund† was king of England, and he was no friend to the Northmen. King Eirik, also, was in no great favour with him; and the word went about that King Jatmund would set another chief over Northumberland. Now when King Eirik heard this, he set off on a viking cruise to the westward; and from the Orkneys took with him the Earls Arnkel and Erlend, the sons of Earl Torf-Einar. Then he sailed to the Hebrides, where there were many vikings and troop-kings, who joined their men to his. With all this force he steered to Ireland first, where he took with him all the men he could, and then to Bretland, and plundered; and sailed thereafter south to England,‡ and marauded there as elsewhere. The people fled before him wherever he appeared. As King Eirik was a bold warrior, and had a great force, he trusted so much to his people that he penetrated far inland in the country, following and plundering the fugitives. King Jatmund

* According to the Saxon Chronicle, Athelstan died in the year 941, after a reign of fourteen years and ten weeks. Florence of Whitehorn, who lived about the year 1110, places his death in 940, after a reign of sixteen years.—L.

† Jatmund, Edmund, Eadmund, in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,—a difference in pronunciation of the same name. Ruled from 941 to 946.—L.

‡ England is applied to the parts occupied by the Anglo-Saxons, and Bretland to the parts occupied by the Welsh and ancient Britons.—L.

had set a king, who was called Olaf, to defend the land; and he gathered an innumerable mass of people, with whom he marched against King Eirik. A dreadful battle ensued,* in which many Englishmen fell; but for one who fell came three in his place out of the country behind, and when evening came on the loss of men turned on the side of the Northmen, and many people fell. Towards the end of the day, King Eirik and five kings with him fell. Three of them were Guthorm and his two sons, Ivar and Harek: there fell, also, Sigurd and Ragnvald; and with them Torf-Einar's two sons, Arnkel and Erlend. Besides these, there was a great slaughter of Northmen; and those who escaped went to Northumberland, and brought the news to Gunhild and her sons.

CHAPTER V.—*Gunhild and her Sons.*

When Gunhild and her sons knew for certain that King Eirik had fallen, after having plundered the land of the King of England, they thought there was no peace to be expected for them; and they made themselves ready to depart from Northumberland, with all the ships King Eirik had left, and all the men who would follow them. They took also all the loose property, and goods which they had gathered partly as taxes in England, partly as booty on their expeditions. With their army they first steered

* This battle, according to the Saxon Chronicle, took place 944. It mentions the fall of a Regenald—Ragnvald—and an Aulaf.—L.

northward to Orkney, where Thorfin Hausakliufer was earl, a son of Torf-Einar, and took up their station there for a time. Eirik's sons subdued these islands and Shetland, took scat for themselves, and stayed there all the winter; but went on viking cruises in summer to the West, and plundered in Scotland and Ireland. About this Glum Geirason * sings :—

"The hero who knows well to ride
The sea-horse † o'er the foaming tide,—
He who in boyhood wild rode o'er
The seaman's horse to Scania's shore,
And showed the Danes his galley's bow,
Right nobly scours the ocean now.
On Scotland's coast he lights the brand
Of flaming war; with conquering hand
Drives many a Scottish warrior tall
To the bright seats in Odin's hall.
The fire-spark, by the fiend of war
Fanned to a flame, soon spreads afar.
Crowds trembling fly,—the southern foes
Fall thick beneath the hero's blows:
The hero's blade drips red with gore,
Staining the green sward on the shore."

CHAPTER VI.—*Battle in Jutland.*

When King Eirik had left the country, King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, subdued the whole of Norway. The first winter [936] he visited the western parts, and then went north, and settled in Throndhjem. But as no peace could be reasonably looked for so long as King Eirik with his forces could come

* Glum Geirason was an Icelander, and the skald of Harald Gray-fell.

† The sea-horse, the ocean steed, &c., are common expressions for a ship,—probably from many having had the figure-head of a horse on the bow.—L.

to Norway from the West sea, he set himself with his men-at-arms in the middle of the country,—in the Fiord district, or in Sogn, or Hordaland, or Rogaland. Hakon placed Sigurd earl of Lade over the whole Throndhjem district, as he and his father had before had it under Harald Harfager. When King Hakon heard of his brother Eirik's death, and also that his sons had no footing in England, he thought there was not much to fear from them, and he went with his troops one summer eastward to Viken. At that time the Danes plundered often in Viken, and wrought much evil there; but when they heard that King Hakon was come with a great army, they got out of the way, to Halland;* and those who were nearest to King Hakon went out to sea, and over to Jutland. When the king heard of this, he sailed after them with all his army. On arriving in Jutland he plundered all round; and when the country people heard of it, they assembled in a great body, and determined to defend their land, and fight. There was a great battle; and King Hakon fought so boldly, that he went forward before his banner without helmet or coat of mail. King Hakon won the victory, and drove the fugitives far up the country. So says Guthorm Sindre, in his song of Hakon:—

"Furrowing the deep-blue sea with oars,
The king pursues to Jutland's shores.

* Halland is a part of the present Sweden. Denmark extended over the provinces of Scania, Halland, and Bleking, on the north or Swedish side of the Sound, in the earliest times, and down to a late period.—L.

They met; and in the battle storm
Of clashing shields, full many a form
Of goodly warrior on the plain,
Full many a corpse by Hakon slain,
Glutted the ravens, who from far,
Scenting the banquet-feast of war,
Came in black flocks to Jutland's plains
To drink the blood-wine from the veins."

CHAPTER VII.—*Battle in the Sound.*

Then Hakon steered southwards with his fleet to seek the vikings, and so on to Seeland. He rowed with two cutters into the Sound, where he found eleven viking ships, and instantly attacked them. It ended in his gaining the victory, and clearing the viking ships of all their men. So says Guthorm Sindre:—

"Hakon the Brave, whose skill all know
To bend in battle storm the bow,
Rushed o'er the waves to Seeland's tongue,
His two war-ships with gilt shields hung,
And cleared the decks with his blue sword
That rules the fate of war, on board
Eleven ships of the Vindland men,—
Famous is Hakon's name since then."

CHAPTER VIII.—*King Hakon's Expedition in Denmark.*

Thereafter King Hakon carried war far and wide in Seeland; plundering some, slaying others, taking some prisoners of war, taking ransom from others,—and all without opposition. Then Hakon proceeded along the coast of Scania, pillaging everywhere, levying taxes and ransoms from the country, and killing all

vikings, both Danish and Vindish.* He then went eastwards to the district of Gautland, marauded there, and took great ransom from the country. So says Guthorm Sindre :—

"Hakon, who midst the battle shock
Stands like a firmly-rooted oak,
Subdued all Seeland with the sword ;
From Vindland vikings the sea-bord
Of Scania swept ; and, with the shield
Of Odin clad, made Gautland yield
A ransom of the ruddy gold,
Which Hakon to his war-men bold
Gave with free hand, who in his feud
Against the arrow-storm had stood."

King Hakon returned back in autumn with his army and an immense booty ; and remained all the winter [946] in Viken to defend it against the Danes and Gautlanders, if they should attack it.

CHAPTER IX.—*Of King Trygve.*

In the same winter King Trygve Olafson returned from a viking cruise in the West sea, having before ravaged in Scotland and Ireland. In spring King Hakon went north, and set his brother's son, King Trygve, over Viken † to defend that country against enemies. He gave him also in property all that he could reconquer of the country in Denmark,‡ which

* Vindland and Vinder mean the country and people along the Baltic coast from Saxland and Holstein eastwards ; and seems to have included Mecklenburg, Pomerania, and Prussia on the Baltic.—L.

† Viken, the country north of the Gota river, forming the great bight of the coast of Norway.—L.

‡ Scania, on the Swedish side of the Sound, was called Denmark, as well as the islands and Jutland.—L.

the summer before King Hakon had subjected to payment of scat to him. So says Guthorm :—

"King Hakon, whose sharp sword dyes red
The bright steel cap on many a head,
Has set a warrior brave and stout
The foreign foeman to keep out,—
To keep that green land safe from war
Which black Night bore to dwarf Annar.*
For many a carle whose trade's to wield
The battle-axe, and swing the shield,
On the swan's ocean-skates† has come,
In white-winged ships, across the foam,—
Across the sea, from far Ireland,
To war against the Norseman's land."

CHAPTER X.—*Of Gunhild's Sons.*

King Harald Gormson‡ ruled over Denmark at that time. He took it much amiss that King Hakon had made war in his dominions, and the report went that he would take revenge; but this did not take place so soon. When Gunhild and her sons heard there was enmity between Denmark and Norway, they began to turn their course from the West. They married King Eirik's daughter, Ragnhild, to Arnfin,§ a son of Thorfin Hausakliufer; and as soon as Eirik's sons went away, Thorfin took the earldom again over the Orkney Islands. Gamle Eirikson was somewhat older than the other brothers, but still he was not a grown man. When Gunhild and her sons came

* The dwarf Annar was the husband of Night, and Earth was their daughter.—L.

† Figurative expressions for ships.—L.

‡ Harald Gormson was king in Denmark from 935–985.

§ According to *Egla*, chap. 62, and *Fagrskinna*, chap. 27, Eirik himself gave Ragnhild to Arnfin.

from the westward to Denmark, they were well received by King Harald. He gave them great fiefs in his kingdom, so that they could maintain themselves and their men very well. He also took Harald Eirikson to be his foster-son, set him on his knee,* and thereafter he was brought up at the Danish king's court. Some of Eirik's sons went out on viking expeditions as soon as they were old enough, and gathered property, ravaging all around in the East sea. They grew up quickly to be handsome men, and far beyond their years in strength and perfection. Glum Geirason tells of one of them in the Grafeld song:—

> "I've heard that, on the Eastland coast,
> Great victories were won and lost.
> The king, whose hand is ever graced
> With gift to skald, his banner placed
> On, and still on; while, midst the play
> Of swords, sung sharp his good sword's sway,
> As strong in arm as free of gold,
> He thinn'd the ranks of warriors bold."

Then Eirik's sons turned northwards with their troops to Viken; but King Trygve kept troops on foot with which he met them, and they had many a battle, in which the victory was sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. Sometimes Eirik's sons plundered in Viken, and sometimes Trygve in Seeland and Halland.

CHAPTER XI.—*King Hakon's Disposition and Government.*

As long as Hakon was king in Norway, there was good peace between the bondes and merchants; so

* Setting the child on the knee of the foster-father appears to have been the symbol of adoption.—L.

that none did harm either to the life or goods of the other. Good seasons also there were, both by sea and land. King Hakon was of a remarkably cheerful disposition, clever in words, and very condescending. He was a man of great understanding also, and bestowed attention on law-giving. He gave out the Gula-thing's laws on the advice of Thorleif the Wise; also the Frosta-thing's laws on the advice of Earl Sigurd, and of other Throndhjem men of wisdom. Eidsiva-thing laws were first established in the country by Halfdan the Black, the father of Harald Harfager,* as has before been written.

CHAPTER XII.—*The Birth of Earl Hakon the Great.*

King Hakon kept Yule at Throndhjem, and Earl Sigurd had made a feast for him at Lade. The night of the first day of Yule the earl's wife, Bergliot, was brought to bed of a boy-child, which afterwards King Hakon poured water over, and gave him his own name. The boy grew up, and became in his day a mighty and able man, and was earl after his father, who was King Hakon's dearest friend.

CHAPTER XIII.—*Of Eystein the Bad.*

Eystein, a king of the Uplands, whom some called the Great, and some the Bad, once on a time made

* Owing to the different means of subsistence in so vast an extent of country, each of the five great Law Things appears to have had laws suitable for its own locality; and the District Things, with their lagman, to have administered these laws.—L.

war in Throndhjem,* and subdued Eyna district and Sparbbyggia district, and set his own son Onund over them; but the Throndhjem people killed him. Then King Eystein made another inroad into Throndhjem, and ravaged the land far and wide, and subdued it. He then offered the people either his slave, who was called Thorer Faxe, or his dog, whose name was Sauer, to be their king. They preferred the dog, as they thought they would sooner get rid of him. Now the dog was, by witchcraft, gifted with three men's wisdom; and when he barked, he spoke one word and barked two. A collar and chain of gold and silver were made for him, and his courtiers carried him in their hands when the weather or ways were foul. A throne was erected for him, and he sat upon a high place, as kings are used to sit. He dwelt in Indri Isle, and had his mansion in a place now called Saurshaug.† It is told that the occasion of his death was that the wolves one day broke into his fold, and his courtiers stirred him up to defend his cattle; but when he ran down from his mound, and attacked the wolves, they tore him into pieces. Many other extra-

* Throndhjem here, and in all the sagas, means not the present town of Throndhjem, which was not founded until Olaf Trygveson's reign, and is always called Nidaros,—that is, the mouth of the river Nid,—and sometimes, as if contemptuously, the Kiopstad, the merchant town; but Throndhjem means the whole district on each side of the Throndhjem fiord, which is 120 miles in length.—L.

† The scene of this strange story has doubtless been referred to Throndhjem for the purpose of explaining the name of the place, Saurshaug. A Danish chronicle makes Adils appoint his dog Rache king of Denmark (*Script. rer. Dan.* i., p. 151). Saxo makes a Swede, Gunnar, appoint his dog king of the Northmen (vii. 351). The lesser Swedish Chronicle makes the Swedish king Eystein appoint his dog Sverre as king in Norway (Klemming's edition, p. 218).

ordinary things were done by this King Eystein against the Throndhjem people, and in consequence of this persecution and trouble, many chiefs and people fled and left their udal properties.

CHAPTER XIV.—*The Colonising of Jamtaland and Helsingjaland.*

Ketil Jamte, a son of Earl Onund of Sparabu, went eastward across the mountain ridge, and with him a great multitude, who took all their farm-stock and goods with them. They cleared the woods, and established large farms, and settled the country afterwards called Jamtaland. Thorer Helsing, Ketil's grandson, on account of a murder, ran away from Jamtaland and fled eastward through the forest, and settled there. Many people followed; and that country, which extends eastward down to the sea-coast, was called Helsingjaland; and its eastern parts are inhabited by Swedes. Now when Harald Harfager took possession of the whole country many people fled before him, both people of Throndhjem and of Naumudal districts; and thus new settlers came to Jamtaland, and some all the way to Helsingjaland. The Helsingjaland people travelled into Svithiod for their merchandise, and thus became altogether subjects of that country. The Jamtaland people, again, were in a manner between the two countries; and nobody cared about them, until Hakon entered into friendly intercourse with Jamtaland, and made friends of the more powerful people. Then they

resorted to him, and promised him obedience and payment of taxes, and became his subjects; for they saw nothing but what was good in him, and being of Norwegian race they would rather stand under his royal authority than under the king of Sweden: and he gave them laws, and rights to their land. All the people of Helsingjaland did the same,—that is, all who were of Norwegian race, from the other side of the great mountain ridge.*

CHAPTER XV.—*King Hakon upholds and spreads Christianity.*

King Hakon was a good Christian when he came to Norway; but as the whole country was heathen, with much heathenish sacrifice, and as many great people, as well as the favour of the common people, were to be conciliated, he resolved to practise his Christianity in private. But he kept Sundays, and the Friday fasts, and some token of the greatest holy-days. He made a law that the festival of Yule should begin at the same time as Christian people held it, and that every man, under penalty, should brew a meal† of malt into ale, and therewith keep the Yule holy as long as it lasted. Before him, the beginning of Yule, or the slaughter night,‡ was the

* According to *Egla*, Hakon also added Vermaland to his conquests.

† A maling, or meal, is a measure of grain still used in Orkney.—L.

‡ Hokun nott, or mid-winter night, at which the Yule of Odin worshippers began, is supposed by Olavius to have taken its name from the slaughtering, hogging, or hewing down cattle on that night for the festival. Hogmaney night is still the name in Edinburgh for the first night in Yule among the common people.—L.

night of mid-winter, and Yule was kept for three days thereafter. It was his intent, as soon as he had set himself fast in the land, and had subjected the whole to his power, to introduce Christianity. He went to work first by enticing to Christianity the men who were dearest to him; and many, out of friendship to him, allowed themselves to be baptized, and some laid aside sacrifices. He dwelt long in the Throndhjem district, for the strength of the country lay there; and when he thought that, by the support of some powerful people there, he could set up Christianity, he sent a message to England for a bishop and other teachers; and when they arrived in Norway, Hakon made it known that he would proclaim Christianity over all the land. The people of More and Raumsdal referred the matter to the people of Throndhjem. King Hakon then had several churches consecrated, and put priests into them; and when he came to Throndhjem he summoned the bondes to a Thing, and invited them to accept Christianity. They gave an answer to the effect that they would defer the matter until the Frosta-thing, at which there would be men from every district of the Throndhjem country, and then they would give their determination upon this difficult matter.

CHAPTER XVI.—*About Sacrifices.*

Sigurd, earl of Lade, was one of the greatest men for sacrifices, and so had Hakon his father been; and

Sigurd always presided on account of the king at all the festivals of sacrifice in the Throndhjem country. It was an old custom, that when there was to be sacrifice all the bondes should come to the spot where the temple stood, and bring with them all that they required while the festival of the sacrifice lasted. To this festival all the men brought ale with them; and all kinds of cattle, as well as horses, were slaughtered, and all the blood that came from them was called *laut*, and the vessels in which it was collected were called laut-vessels. Laut-staves were made, like sprinkling brushes, with which the whole of the altars and the temple walls, both outside and inside, were sprinkled over, and also the people were sprinkled with the blood; but the flesh was boiled into savoury meat for those present. The fire was in the middle of the floor of the temple, and over it hung the kettles, and the full goblets were handed across the fire; and he who made the feast, and was a chief, blessed the full goblets, and all the meat of the sacrifice. And first Odin's goblet was emptied for victory and power to his king; thereafter, Niord's and Freyja's goblets for peace and a good season. Then it was the custom of many to empty the brage-goblet;* and then the guests emptied a goblet to the memory of departed friends, called the remembrance-goblet. Sigurd the earl was an open-handed man, who did what was very much celebrated; namely, he made a great sacrifice festival at Lade, of which he paid

* The brage-goblet, over which vows were made.—L.

all the expenses. Kormak Ogmundson * sings of it in his ballad of Sigurd :—

"Of cup or platter need has none
The guest who seeks the generous one,—
Sigurd the Generous, who can trace
His lineage from the giant † race ;
For Sigurd's hand is bounteous, free,—
The guardian of the temples he.
He loves the gods,—his liberal hand
Scatters his sword's gains o'er the land."

CHAPTER XVII.—*The Frosta-thing.*

King Hakon came to the Frosta-thing, at which a vast multitude of people were assembled. And when the Thing was seated, the king spoke to the people, and began his speech with saying,—it was his message and entreaty to the bondes and householding men, both great and small, and to the whole public in general, young and old, rich and poor, women as well as men, that they should all allow themselves to be baptized, and should believe in one God, and in Christ the son of Mary ; and refrain from all sacrifices and heathen gods ; and should keep holy the seventh day, and abstain from all work on it, and keep a fast on the seventh day. As soon as the king had proposed this to the bondes, great was the murmur and noise among the crowd. They complained that the king wanted to take their labour and their old faith from them, and the land could not be cultivated in

* Kormak is the hero of the *Kormak Saga*. He was born about 937, and came to Norway 959. He visited Ireland, and died in Scotland the summer of 965.

† Through Saming he descended from the giant Thjasse's daughter, Skade.

that way. The labouring men and slaves thought that they could not work if they did not get meat; and they said it was the character of King Hakon, and his father, and all the family, to be generous enough with their money, but sparing with their diet. Asbiorn of Medalhus in the Gaulardal stood up, and answered thus to the king's proposal :—

"We bondes, King Hakon, when we elected thee to be our king, and got back our udal rights at the Thing held in Throndhjem, thought we had got into heaven; but now we don't know whether we have really got back our freedom, or whether thou wishest to make vassals of us again by this extraordinary proposal—that we should abandon the ancient faith which our fathers and forefathers have held from the oldest times, in the times when the dead were burnt, as well as since that they are laid under mounds, and which, although they were braver than the people of our days, has served us as a faith to the present time. We have also held thee so dear, that we have allowed thee to rule and give law and right to all the country. And even now we bondes will unanimously hold by the law which thou givest us here in the Frosta-thing, and to which we have also given our assent;* and we will follow thee, and have thee for our king, as long as there is a living man among us bondes here in this Thing assembled. But thou, king, must use

* Our yea. The assent of the people in old times to the laws and the power of the Frosta-thing, are as well defined as in our Parliament in this speech.—L.

some moderation towards us, and only require from us such things as we can obey thee in, and are not impossible for us. If, however, thou wilt take up this matter with a high hand, and wilt try thy power and strength against us, we bondes have resolved among ourselves to part with thee, and to take to ourselves some other chief, who will so conduct himself towards us that we can freely and safely enjoy that faith that suits our own inclinations. Now, king, thou must choose one or other of these conditions before the Thing is ended."

The bondes gave loud applause to this speech, and said it expressed their will, and they would stand or fall by what had been spoken. When silence was again restored, Earl Sigurd said, "It is King Hakon's will to give way to you, the bondes, and never to separate himself from your friendship." The bondes replied, that it was their desire that the king should offer a sacrifice for peace and a good year, as his father was wont to do; and thereupon the noise and tumult ceased, and the Thing was concluded. Earl Sigurd spoke to the king afterwards, and advised him not to refuse altogether to do as the people desired, saying there was nothing else for it but to give way to the will of the bondes; "for it is, as thou hast heard thyself, the will and earnest desire of the head-people, as well as of the multitude. Hereafter we may find a good way to manage it." And in this resolution the king and earl agreed [950].

CHAPTER XVIII.—*The Peasants force King Hakon to offer Sacrifices.*

The harvest thereafter, towards the winter season, there was a festival of sacrifice at Lade, and the king came to it. It had always been his custom before, when he was present at a place where there was sacrifice, to take his meals in a little house by himself, or with some few of his men; but the bondes grumbled that he did not seat himself on his throne at these the most joyous of the meetings of the people. The earl said that the king should do so this time. The king accordingly sat upon his throne. Now when the first full goblet was filled, Earl Sigurd spoke some words over it, blessed it in Odin's name, and drank to the king out of the horn; and the king then took it, and made the sign of the cross over it. Then said Kar of Gryting, "What does the king mean by doing so? Will he not sacrifice?" Earl Sigurd replies, "The king is doing what all of you do, who trust to your power and strength. He is blessing the full goblet in the name of Thor, by making the sign of his hammer over it before he drinks it." On this there was quietness for the evening. The next day, when the people sat down to table, the bondes pressed the king strongly to eat of horse-flesh; * and as he

* This eating of horse-flesh at these religious festivals was considered the most direct proof of paganism in the following times, and was punished by death or mutilation by Saint Olaf. It was a ceremony apparently commemorative of their Asiatic origin and ancestors. In Norway, or in Iceland, where horse-flesh also was eaten at these pagan festivals, the horse is not an animal that could ever have been in common use for food, as in the plains of Asia; because it cannot, as in Asia, be

would on no account do so, they wanted him to drink of the soup; and as he would not do this, they insisted he should at least taste the gravy; and on his refusal they were going to lay hands on him. Earl Sigurd came and made peace among them, by asking the king to hold his mouth over the handle of the kettle, upon which the fat smoke of the boiled horse-flesh had settled itself; and the king first laid a linen cloth over the handle, and then gaped over it, and returned to the throne; but neither party was satisfied with this.

CHAPTER XIX.—*Feast of the Sacrifice at More.*

The winter thereafter the king prepared a Yule feast in More, and eight chiefs resolved with each other to meet at it. Four of them were from without the Throndhjem district—namely, Kar of Gryting Asbiorn of Medalhus, Thorberg of Varnes, and Orm from Ljoxa; and from the Throndhjem district, Botolf of Olvishaug, Narfe of Staf in Verdal, Thrand Hak from Egg, and Thorer Skeg from Husabo in Indriey. These eight men bound themselves, the four first to root out Christianity in Norway, and the four others to oblige the king to offer sacrifice to the gods. The four first went in four ships southwards to More, and killed three priests, and burnt three churches, and then they returned. Now, when King Hakon and Earl Sigurd came to More with

easily reared and subsisted. This is perhaps the strongest proof of the truth of the saga tradition of Odin having come into Scandinavia from the banks of the Don—the Tanais.—L.

their court, the bondes assembled in great numbers; and immediately, on the first day of the feast, the bondes insisted hard with the king that he should offer sacrifice, and threatened him with violence if he refused. Earl Sigurd tried to make peace between them, and brought it so far that the king took some bits of horse-liver, and emptied all the goblets the bondes filled for him without the sign of the cross; but as soon as the feast was over, the king and the earl returned to Lade. The king was very ill pleased, and made himself ready to leave Throndhjem forthwith with all his people; saying that the next time he came to Throndhjem, he would come with such strength of men-at-arms that he would repay the bondes for their enmity towards him. Earl Sigurd entreated the king not to take it amiss of the bondes; adding, that it was not wise to threaten them, or to make war upon the people within the country, and especially in the Throndhjem district, where the strength of the land lay; but the king was so enraged that he would not listen to a word from anybody. He went out from Throndhjem, and proceeded south to More, where he remained the rest of the winter, and on to the spring season; and when summer came he assembled men, and the report was that he intended with this army to attack the Throndhjem people.

Chapter XX.—*Battle at Augvaldsnes.*

But just as the king had embarked with a great force of troops, the news was brought him from the

south of the country, that King Eirik's sons had come from Denmark to Viken, and had driven King Trygve Olafson from his ships at Sotanes, and then had plundered far and wide around in Viken, and that many had submitted to them. Now when King Hakon heard this news, he thought that help was needed; and he sent word to Earl Sigurd, and to the other chiefs from whom he could expect help, to hasten to his assistance. Sigurd the earl came accordingly with a great body of men, among whom were all the Throndhjem people who had set upon him the hardest to offer sacrifice; and all made their peace with the king, by the earl's persuasion. Now King Hakon sailed south along the coast; and when he came south as far as Stad, he heard that Eirik's sons were come to North Agder. Then they advanced against each other, and met at Karmt. Both parties left their ships there, and gave battle at Augvaldsnes. Both parties had a great force, and it was a great battle. King Hakon went forwards bravely, and King Guthorm Eirikson met him with his troop, and they exchanged blows with each other. Guthorm fell, and his standard was cut down. Many people fell around him. The army of Eirik's sons then took flight to their ships, and rowed away with the loss of many a man. So says Guthorm Sindre :—

"The king's voice waked the silent host
Who slept beside the wild sea-coast,
And bade the song of spear and sword
Over the battle plain be heard.
Where heroes' shields the loudest rang,
Where loudest was the sword-blade's clang,

By the sea-shore at Karmt Sound,
Hakon felled Guthorm to the ground."

Now King Hakon returned to his ships, and pursued Gunhild's sons.* And both parties sailed all they could sail, until they came to East Agder†, from whence Eirik's sons set out to sea, and southwards for Jutland. Guthorm Sindre speaks of it in his song: —

"And Guthorm's brothers too, who know
So skilfully to bend the bow,
The conquering hand must also feel
Of Hakon, god of the bright steel,—
The sun-god, whose bright rays, that dart
Flame-like, are swords that pierce the heart.
Well I remember how the King
Hakon, the battle's life and spring,
O'er the wide ocean cleared away
Eirik's brave sons. They durst not stay,
But round their ships' sides hung their shields,
And fled across the blue sea-fields."

King Hakon returned then northwards to Norway, but Eirik's sons remained a long time in Denmark.

Chapter XXI.—*King Hakon's Laws.*

King Hakon after this battle made a law, that all inhabited land over the whole country along the sea-coast, and as far back from it as the salmon swims up in the rivers, should be divided into ship-raths according to the districts; and it was fixed by law how many ships there should be from each district, and how great each should be, when the whole people

* Eirik's sons are often called Gunhild's sons, from their mother.—L.

† East Agder appears to have been the district up to Christiansand; and West or North Agder from thence to about Flekkefiord.—L.

were called out on service. For this outfit the whole inhabitants should be bound, whenever a foreign army came to the country. With this came also the order that beacons should be erected upon the hills, so that every man could see from the one to the other; and it is told that a war-signal could thus be given in seven days, from the most southerly beacon to the most northerly Thing-seat in Halogaland.

CHAPTER XXII.—*Concerning Eirik's Sons.*

Eirik's sons plundered much on the Baltic coasts, and sometimes, as before related, in Norway; but so long as Hakon ruled over Norway there was in general good peace, and good seasons, and he was the most beloved of kings. When Hakon had reigned about twenty years in Norway, Eirik's sons came from Denmark with a powerful army, of which a great part consisted of the people who had followed them on their expeditions; but a still greater army of Danes had been placed at their disposal by King Harald Gormson. They sailed with a fair wind from Vendel,* and came to Agder; and then sailed northwards, night and day, along the coast. But the beacons were not fired, because it had been usual to look for them lighted from the east onwards, and nobody had observed them from the east coast; and besides King Hakon had set heavy penalties for giving false alarm, by lighting the beacons without occasion. The reason of this was, that ships of war and vikings

* The end of Jutland, to the north of Limfiord.—L.

cruised about and plundered among the outlying islands, and the country people took them for Eirik's sons, and lighted the beacons, and set the whole country in trouble and dread of war. Sometimes, no doubt, the sons of Eirik were there; but having only their own troop, and no Danish army with them, they returned to Denmark; and sometimes these were other vikings. King Hakon was very angry at this, because it cost both trouble and money to no purpose. The bondes also suffered by these false alarms when they were given uselessly; and thus it happened that no news of this expedition of Eirik's sons circulated through the land until they had come as far north as Ulfasund,* where they lay for seven days. Then spies set off across Eid and northwards to More. King Hakon was at that time in the island Frede, in North More, at a place called Birkistrand, where he had a dwelling-house, and had no troops with him, only his bodyguard or court, and the neighbouring bondes he had invited to his house.

Chapter XXIII.—*Of Egil Ulserk.*

The spies came to King Hakon, and told him that Eirik's sons, with a great army, lay just to the south of Stad. Then he called together the most understanding of the men about him, and asked their opinion, whether he should fight with Eirik's sons, although they had such a great multitude with them,

* In Nordfjord.

or should set off northwards to gather together more men. Now there was a bonde there, by name Egil Ulserk, who was a very old man, but in former days had been strong and stout beyond most men, and a hardy man-at-arms withal, having long carried King Harald Fairhair's banner. Egil answered thus to the king's speech,—"I was in several battles with thy father Harald the king, and he gave battle sometimes with many, sometimes with few people; but he always came off with victory. Never did I hear him ask counsel of his friends whether he should fly—and neither shalt thou get any such counsel from us, king; but as we know we have a brave leader, thou shalt get a trusty following from us." Many others agreed with this speech, and the king himself declared he was most inclined to fight with such strength as they could gather. It was so determined. The king split up a war-arrow, which he sent off in all directions, and by that token a number of men was collected in all haste. Then said Egil Ulserk,—"At one time the peace had lasted so long I was afraid I might come to die the death of old age,* within doors upon a bed of straw, although I would rather fall in battle following my chief. And now it may so turn out in the end as I wished it to be."

CHAPTER XXIV.—*Battle at Fredarberg.*

Eirik's sons sailed northwards around Stad, as soon as the wind suited; and when they had passed it,

* In all the sagas of this pagan time, the dying on a bed of sickness is mentioned as a kind of derogatory end of a man of any celebrity.—L.

and heard where King Hakon was, they sailed to meet him. King Hakon had nine ships, with which he lay under Fredarberg in Feey Sound; and Eirik's sons had twenty ships, with which they brought up on the south side of the same cape, in Feey Sound. King Hakon sent them a message, asking them to go upon the land; and telling them that he had hedged in with hazel boughs a place of combat at Rastarkalf, where there is a flat large field, at the foot of a long and rather low ridge. Then Eirik's sons left their ships, and went northwards over the neck of land within Fredarberg, and onward to Rastarkalf. Then Egil asked King Hakon to give him ten men with ten banners, and the king did so. Then Egil went with his men under the ridge; but King Hakon went out upon the open field with his army, and set up his banner, and drew up his army, saying, "Let us draw up in a long line, that they may not surround us, as they have the most men." And so it was done; and there was a severe battle, and a very sharp attack. Then Egil Ulserk set up the ten banners he had with him, and placed the men who carried them so that they should go as near the summit of the ridge as possible, and leaving a space between each of them. They went so near the summit that the banners could be seen over it, and moved on as if they were coming behind the army of Eirik's sons. Now when the men who stood uppermost in the line of the troops of Eirik's sons saw so many flying banners advancing high over the edge of the ridge, they supposed a great force must be following, who would come

behind their army, and between them and their ships. They made each other acquainted with what was going on in a loud shout, and the whole took to flight; and when the king saw it, they fled with the rest. King Hakon now pushes on briskly with his people, pursuing the flying, and killing many.

CHAPTER XXV.—*Of King Gamle, the Son of Eirik.*

When Gamle Eirikson came up the ridge of the hill he turned round, and he observed that not more people were following than his men had been engaged with already, and he saw it was but a stratagem of war; so he ordered the war-horns to be blown, his banner to be set up, and he put his men in battle order. On this, all his Northmen stood, and turned with him, but the Danes fled to the ships; and when King Hakon and his men came thither, there was again a sharp conflict; but now Hakon had most people. At last the Eirik's sons' force fled, and took the road south about the hill; but a part of their army retreated upon the hill southwards, followed by King Hakon. There is a flat field east of the ridge which runs westward along the range of hills, and is bounded on its west side by a steep ridge. Gamle's men retreated towards this ground; but Hakon followed so closely that he killed some, and others ran west over the ridge, and were killed on that side of it. King Hakon did not part with them till the last man of them was killed.

CHAPTER XXVI.—*King Gamle and Ulserk Fall.*

Gamle Eirikson fled from the ridge down upon the plain to the south of the hill. There he turned himself again, and waited until more people gathered to him. All his brothers, and many troops of their men, assembled there. Egil Ulserk was in front, and in advance of Hakon's men, and made a stout attack. He and King Gamle exchanged blows with each other, and King Gamle got a grievous wound; but Egil fell, and many people with him. Then came Hakon the king with the troops which had followed him, and a new battle began. King Hakon pushed on, cutting down men on both sides of him, and killing the one upon the top of the other. So sings Guthorm Sindre:—

"Scared by the sharp swords' singing sound,
Brandished in air, the foe gave ground.
The boldest warrior cannot stand
Before King Hakon's conquering hand;
And the king's banner ever flies
Where the spear-forests thickest rise.
Altho' the king had gained of old
Enough of Freyja's tears of gold,*
He spared himself no more than tho'
He'd had no well-filled purse to show."†

When Eirik's sons saw their men falling all round, they turned and fled to their ships; but those who

* Freyja's husband was Od; and her tears, when she wept at the long absence of her husband, were tears of gold. Od's wife's tears is the skald's expression here for gold—understood, no doubt, as readily as any allusion to Plutus would convey the equivalent meaning in modern poetry.—L.

† Wealth, the acquisition of wealth, appears then to have been the stimulus to enterprise, as much as in our times; and wealth gained, and liberally used, the great subject of the skalds' praises.—L.

had sought the ships before had pushed off some of them from the land, while some of them were still hauled up and on the strand. Now the sons of Eirik and their men plunged into the sea, and betook themselves to swimming. Gamle Eirikson was drowned; but the other sons of Eirik reached their ships, and set sail with what men remained. They steered southwards to Denmark, where they stopped a while, very ill satisfied with their expedition.

CHAPTER XXVII.—*Egil Ulserk's Burial-ground.*

King Hakon took all the ships of the sons of Eirik that had been left upon the strand, and had them drawn quite up, and brought on the land. Then he ordered that Egil Ulserk, and all the men of his army who had fallen, should be laid in the ships, and covered entirely over with earth and stones. King Hakon made many of the ships to be drawn up to the field of battle, and the hillocks over them are to be seen to the present day a little to the south of Fredarberg. At the time when King Hakon was killed, when Glum Geirason, in his song, boasted of King Hakon's fall, Eyvind Skaldaspiller composed these verses on this battle :—

> "Our dauntless king with Gamle's gore
> Sprinkled his bright sword o'er and o'er;
> Sprinkled the gag that holds the mouth
> Of the fell demon Fenriswolf.*

* The Fenriswolf, one of the children of Loke, begotten with a giantess, was chained to a rock, and gagged by a sword placed in his mouth, to prevent him devouring mankind. Fenriswolf's gag is a skaldic expression for a sword.—L.

Proud swelled our warriors' hearts when he
Drove Eirik's sons out to the sea,
With all their Gautland host: but now
Our warriors weep—Hakon lies low!"

High standing stones * mark Egil Ulserk's grave.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—*News of War comes to King Hakon.*

When King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, had been king for twenty-six years after his brother Eirik had left the country, it happened that he was at a feast in Hordaland in the house at Fitjar on the island Stord, and he had with him at the feast his court and many of the peasants. And just as the king was seated at the supper-table, his watchmen who were outside observed many ships coming sailing along from the south, and not very far from the island. Now, said the one to the other, they should inform the king that they thought an armed force was coming against them; but none thought it advisable to be the bearer of an alarm of war to the king, as he had set heavy penalties on those who raised such alarms falsely, yet they thought it unsuitable that the king should remain in ignorance of what they saw.†

* The stones set on end in the ground, and ten or twelve feet high or more, are called standing stones in the Orkney Isles, and other places held by the Scandinavians; and the oblong tumuli found on the coast have very probably been cast over small ships turned bottom up over the bodies of the slain, as described in this chapter, and are called ship mounds, to distinguish them from other mounds, by the Norwegian antiquaries.—L.

† A curious instance of the discipline and deference for the king of these Northmen, and which accounts for their success against the people they invaded, and is also singularly in contrast with what follows—the reference by the king to his men for approving his plan of giving battle and not retreating. This strict discipline and freedom united account for the success of their predatory expeditions.

Then one of them went into the room and asked Eyvind Finson to come out as fast as possible, for it was very needful. Eyvind immediately came out and went to where he could see the ships, and saw directly that a great army was on the way; and he returned in all haste into the room, and, placing himself before the king, said, "Short is the hour for acting, and long the hour for feasting." The king cast his eyes upon him, and said, "What now is in the way?" Eyvind said—

"Up, king! the avengers are at hand!
Eirik's bold sons approach the land!
The judgment of the sword they crave
Against their foe. Thy wrath I brave;
Tho' well I know 'tis no light thing
To bring war-tidings to the king,
And tell him 'tis no time to rest.
Up! gird your armour to your breast:
Thy honour's dearer than my life;
Therefore I say, up to the strife!"

Then said the king, "Thou art too brave a fellow, Eyvind, to bring us any false alarm of war." The others all said it was a true report. The king ordered the tables to be removed, and then he went out to look at the ships; and when it could be clearly seen that these were ships of war, the king asked his men what resolution they should take—whether to give battle with the men they had, or go on board ship and sail away northwards along the land. "For it is easy to see," said he, "that we must now fight against a much greater force than we ever had against us before; although we thought just the same the last time we fought against Gunhild's sons." No one

was in a hurry to give an answer to the king; but at last Eyvind replied to the king's speech:—

"Thou who in the battle-plain
Hast often poured the sharp spear-rain!
Ill it beseems our warriors brave
To fly upon the ocean wave:
To fly upon the blue wave north,
When Harald from the south comes forth,
With many a ship riding in pride
Upon the foaming ocean-tide;
With many a ship and southern viking,—
Let us take shield in hand, brave king!"

The king replied, "Thy counsel, Eyvind, is manly, and after my own heart; but I will hear the opinion of others upon this matter." Now as the king's men thought they discerned what way the king was inclined to take, they answered that they would rather fall bravely and like men, than fly before the Danes; adding, that they had often gained the victory against greater odds of numbers. The king thanked them for their resolution, and bade them arm themselves; and all the men did so. The king put on his armour, and girded on his sword Kvernbit, and put a gilt helmet upon his head, and took a spear in his hand, and a shield by his side. He then drew up his courtmen and the bondes in one body, and set up his banner.

CHAPTER XXIX.—*The Armament of Eirik's Sons.*

After Gamle's death King Harald, Eirik's son, was the chief of the brothers, and he had a great army with him from Denmark. In their army were also their mother's brothers, — Eyvind Skreyja, and Alf

Askmand, both strong and able men, and great man-slayers. The sons of Eirik brought up with their ships off the island, and it is said that their force was not less than six to one,—so much stronger in men were Eirik's sons.

CHAPTER XXX.—*King Hakon's Battle Array.*

When King Hakon had drawn up his men, it is told of him that he threw off his armour before the battle began. So sings Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

"They found Biorn's brother* bold
Under his banner as of old,
Ready for battle. Foes advance,—
The front rank raise the shining lance;
And now begins the bloody fray!
Now! now begins Hild's wild play!†
Our noble king, whose name strikes fear
Into each Danish heart,—whose spear
Has single-handed spilt the blood
Of many a Danish noble,—stood
Beneath his helmet's eagle wing‡
Amidst his guards; but the brave king
Scorned to wear armour, while his men
Bared naked breasts against the rain
Of spear and arrow. Off he flung
His coat of mail, his breast-plate rung
Against the stones; and, blithe and gay,
He rushed into the thickest fray.
With golden helm, and naked breast,
Brave Hakon played at slaughter's feast."

King Hakon selected willingly such men for his guard or court-men as were distinguished for their strength and bravery, as his father King Harald also

* King Hakon.—L. † Hild's play was battle.—L.
‡ The helm was adorned with eagle's feathers, or with the figure of an eagle.—L.

used to do; and among these was Thoralf Skolmson the Strong,* who went on one side of the king. He had helmet and shield, spear and sword; and his sword was called by the name of Footbreadth. It was said that Thoralf and King Hakon were equal in strength. Thiord Siarekson speaks of it in the poem he composed concerning Thoralf:—

"The king's men went with merry words
To the sharp clash of shields and swords,
When these wild rovers of the sea
At Fitjar fought. Stout Thoralf he
Next to the Northmen's hero came,
Scattering wide round the battle flame,
For in the storm of shields not one
Ventured like him with brave Hakon."

When both lines met there was a hard combat, and much bloodshed. The combatants threw their spears, and then drew their swords. Then King Hakon, and Thoralf with him, went in advance of the banner, cutting down on both sides of them. So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

"The body-coats of linked steel,
The woven iron coats of mail,
Like water fly before the swing
Of Hakon's sword—the champion-king.
About each Gotland war-man's head
Helm splits, like ice beneath the tread,
Cloven by the axe or sharp sword-blade.
The brave king, foremost in the fight,
Dyes crimson-red the spotless white
Of his bright shield with foemen's gore,—
Amidst the battle wild uproar,
Wild pealing round from shore to shore."

* Thoralf Skolmson is often mentioned for his strength; for example, in *Grettis Saga*, chapter 58. He was born in 942, and consequently he was not more than eighteen years old when he took part in this Fitjar battle.

CHAPTER XXXI.—*The Fall of Eyvind Skreyja and of Alf Askmand.*

King Hakon was very conspicuous among other men, and also when the sun shone his helmet glanced, and thereby many weapons were directed at him. Then Eyvind Finson took a hat and put it over the king's helmet. Now Eyvind Skreyja called out, "Does the king of the Norsemen hide himself, or has he fled? Where is now the golden helmet?" Then Eyvind, and his brother Alf with him, pushed on like fools or madmen. The king said, "Come on as ye are coming, and ye will find the king of the Norsemen." So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

"The raiser of the storm of shields,
The conqueror in battle fields,—
Hakon the brave, the warrior's friend,
Who scatters gold with liberal hand,
Heard Skreyja's taunt, and saw him rush
Amidst the sharp spears' thickest push,
And loudly shouted in reply—
'If thou wilt for the victory try,
The Norseman's king thou soon shalt find!
Hold onwards, friend! Hast thou a mind?'"

It was also but a short space of time before Eyvind did come up swinging his sword, and made a cut at the king; but Thoralf thrust his shield so hard against Eyvind that he tottered with the shock. Now the king takes his sword Kvernbit with both hands, and hewed Eyvind through helm and head, and clove him down to the shoulders. Thoralf also slew Alf Askmand. So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

"With both his hands the gallant king
Swung round his sword, and to the chin

Clove Eyvind down: his faithless mail
Against it could no more avail,
Than the thin plank against the shock
When the ship's side beats on the rock.
By his bright sword with golden haft
Thro' helm, and head, and hair, was cleft
The Danish champion; and amain,
With terror smitten, fled his men."

After this fall of the two brothers, King Hakon pressed on so hard that all men gave way before his assault. Now fear came over the army of Eirik's sons, and the men began to fly; and King Hakon, who was at the head of his men, pressed on the flying, and hewed down oft and hard. Then flew an arrow, one of the kind called *flein*, into Hakon's arm, into the muscles below the shoulder; and it is said by many people that Gunhild's shoe-boy, whose name was Kisping, ran out and forwards amidst the confusion of arms, and called out "Make room for the king-killer." Others again say that nobody could tell who shot the king, which is indeed the most likely; for spears, arrows, and all kinds of missiles flew as thick as a snow-drift. Many of the people of Eirik's sons were killed, both on the field of battle and on the way to the ships, and also on the strand, and many threw themselves into the water. Many also, among whom were Eirik's sons, got on board their ships, and rowed away as fast as they could, and Hakon's men after them. So says Thiord Siarekson:—

"The wolf, the murderer, and the thief,
Fled from before the people's chief:
Few breakers of the peace grew old
Under the Northmen's king so bold.

When gallant Hakon lost his life
Black was the day, and dire the strife.
It was bad work for Gunhild's sons,
Leading their pack of hungry Danes
From out the south, to have to fly,
And many a bonde leave to die,
Leaning his heavy wounded head
On the oar-bench for feather-bed.
Thoralf was nearest to the side
Of gallant Hakon in the tide
Of battle; his the sword that best
Carved out the raven's bloody feast:
Amidst the heaps of foemen slain
He was named bravest on the plain."

CHAPTER XXXII.—*Hakon's Death.*

When King Hakon came out to his ship he had his wound bound up; but the blood ran from it so much and so constantly, that it could not be stopped; and when the day was drawing to an end his strength began to leave him. Then he told his men that he wanted to go northwards to his house at Alrekstad;* but when he came north, as far as Hakon's Hill,† they put in towards the land, for by this time the king was almost lifeless. Then he called his friends around him, and told them what he wished to be done with regard to his kingdom. He had only one child, a daughter, called Thora, and had no son. Now he told them to send a message to Eirik's sons, that they should be kings over the country; but asked them to hold his friends in respect and honour. "And if fate," added he, "should prolong my life,

* Alrekstad is now called Arstad, in the neighbourhood of Bergen.—L.

† Hakon's Hill is now called Hakhelle,—the hill or helle on the mainland south of Alv Isle, in Asko parish.—L.

I will, at any rate, leave the country, and go to a Christian land, and do penance for what I have done against God; but should I die in heathen land, give me any burial you think fit." Shortly afterwards Hakon expired, at the little hill on the shore-side at which he was born. So great was the sorrow over Hakon's death, that he was lamented both by friends and enemies; and they said that never again would Norway see such a king. His friends removed his body to Seaheim,* in North Hordaland, and made a great mound, in which they laid the king in full armour and in his best clothes, but with no other goods. They spoke over his grave, as heathen people are used to do, and wished him in Valhal. Eyvind Skaldaspiller composed a poem on the death of King Hakon, and on how well he was received in Valhal. The poem is called "Hakonarmal:"—

"In Odin's hall an empty place
Stands for a king of Yngve's race;
'Go, my valkyries,' Odin said,
'Go forth, my angels of the dead,
Gondul and Skogul, to the plain
Drenched with the battle's bloody rain,
And to the dying Hakon tell,
Here in Valhal shall he dwell.'

"At Stord, so late a lonely shore,
Was heard the battle's wild uproar;
The lightning of the flashing sword
Burned fiercely at the shore of Stord.
From levelled halberd and spear-head
Life-blood was dropping fast and red;
And the keen arrows' biting sleet
Upon the shore at Stord fast beat.

* At Seaheim, now Seim, in a parish north of Bergen, the mound is still remaining, and called Hakon's. This battle at Stord and Hakon's death took place 960.—L.

"Upon the thundering cloud of shield
Flashed bright the sword-storm o'er the field;
And on the plate-mail rattled loud
The arrow-shower's rushing cloud,
In Odin's tempest-weather, there
Swift whistling through the angry air;
And the spear-torrents swept away
Ranks of brave men from light of day.

"With batter'd shield, and blood-smear'd sword,
Sits one beside the shore on Stord,
With armour crushed and gashed sits he,
A grim and ghastly sight to see;
And round about in sorrow stand
The warriors of his gallant band:
Because the king of Dag's old race
In Odin's hall must fill a place.

"Then up spake Gondul, standing near,
Resting upon her long ash spear,—
'Hakon! the gods' cause prospers well,
And thou in Odin's halls shalt dwell!'
The king beside the shore of Stord
The speech of the valkyrie heard,
Who sat there on his coal-black steed,
With shield on arm and helm on head.

"Thoughtful, said Hakon, 'Tell me why,
Ruler of battles, victory
Is so dealt out on Stord's red plain?
Have we not well deserved to gain?'
'And is it not as well dealt out?'
Said Gondul. 'Hearest thou not the shout?
The field is cleared—the foemen run—
The day is ours—the battle won!'

"Then Skogul said, 'My coal-black steed,
Home to the gods I now must speed,
To their green home, to tell the tiding
That Hakon's self is thither riding.'
To Hermod and to Brage then
Said Odin, 'Here, the first of men,
Brave Hakon comes, the Norsemen's king,—
Go forth, my welcome to him bring.'

"Fresh from the battle-field came in,
Dripping with blood, the Norsemen's king.

'Methinks,' said he, 'great Odin's will
Is harsh, and bodes me further ill:
Thy son from off the field to-day
From victory to snatch away!'
But Odin said, 'Be thine the joy
Valhal gives, my own brave boy!'

"And Brage said, 'Eight brothers here
Welcome thee to Valhal's cheer,
To drain the cup, or fights repeat
Where Hakon Eirik's earls beat.'
Quoth the stout king, 'And shall my gear,
Helm, sword, and mail-coat, axe and spear,
Be still at hand? 'Tis good to hold
Fast by our trusty friends of old.'

"Well was it seen that Hakon still
Had saved the temples from all ill;*
For the whole council of the gods
Welcomed the king to their abodes.
Happy the day when men are born
Like Hakon, who all base things scorn,—
Win from the brave an honoured name,
And die amidst an endless fame.

"Sooner shall Fenriswolf† devour
The race of man from shore to shore,
Than such a grace to kingly crown
As gallant Hakon want renown.
Life, land, friends, riches, all will fly,
And we in slavery shall sigh.‡
But Hakon in the blessed abodes
For ever lives with the bright gods."

* Hakon, although a Christian, appears to have favoured the old religion, and spared the temples of Odin; and therefore a place in Valhal is assigned him.—L.

† The Fenriswolf is kept in chains and gagged with a sword until the end of the world, when he is to devour mankind.—L.

‡ This is supposed to allude to the successor of Hakon, one of Eirik's sons, whose government was tyrannical and disliked.—L.

V.

SAGA OF KING HARALD GRAYSKIN, AND OF EARL HAKON SON OF SIGURD.*

INTRODUCTORY.

THIS saga might be called Gunhild's Saga, as she is the chief person in it. The reign of King Harald and Earl Hakon is more fully described in the next saga, that is, Olaf Trygveson's. Other literature on this epoch :—

Agrip (chap. 8).
Historia Norvegiæ (p. 12).
Thjodrek (chap. 5).
Saxo (pp. 479–482).
Egla (chaps. 81, 82).
Floamanna (chap. 12).
Fareyinga (chaps. 2, 4, 10).
Halfred's Saga (chap. 2).
Hord Grimkelsons Saga (chaps. 13, 18).
Kormak (chaps. 19–27).
Laxdæla (chaps. 19–21).
Njala (chaps. 3–6).

The skalds of this saga are :—Glum Geirason, Kormak Agmundson, Eyvind Skaldaspiller, and Einar Helgason Skalaglam.

CHAPTER I.—*Beginning of the Government of the Sons of Eirik: and about Eyvind Skaldaspiller.*

When King Hakon was killed, the sons of Eirik took the sovereignty of Norway. Harald, who was the oldest of the living brothers,† was over them in

* Harald Grayfell or Grayskin reigned from about the year 961 to about the year 969; and Earl Hakon from about 963 to 995.—L.

† The brothers then living were, according to Snorre, Harald, Gudrod, Sigurd, Ragnfred, and Erling.

dignity. Their mother Gunhild, who was called the King-mother, mixed herself much in the affairs of the country. There were many chiefs in the land at that time. There was Trygve Olafson in the Eastland, Gudrod Biornson in Vestfold, Sigurd earl of Lade in the Throndhjem land; but Gunhild's sons held the middle of the country the first winter. There went messages and ambassadors between Gunhild's sons and Trygve and Gudrod, and all was settled upon the footing that they should hold from Gunhild's sons the same part of the country which they formerly had held under King Hakon. A man called Glum Geirason, who was King Harald's skald, and was a very brave man, made this song upon King Hakon's death :—

"Gamle is avenged by Harald !
Great is thy deed, thou champion bold !
The rumour of it came to me
In distant lands beyond the sea,
How Harald gave King Hakon's blood
To Odin's ravens for their food."

This song was much favoured. When Eyvind Finson heard of it he composed the song which was given before,† viz. :—

"Our dauntless king with Gamle's gore
Sprinkled his bright sword o'er and o'er," &c.

This song also was much favoured, and was spread widely abroad; and when King Harald came to hear of it, he laid a charge against Eyvind affecting his life; but friends made up the quarrel, on the condition that Eyvind should in future be Harald's skald,

* Chapter 27 of the Saga of Hakon Athelstan's foster-son.—L.

as he had formerly been King Hakon's. There was also some relationship between them, as Gunhild, Eyvind's mother, was a daughter of Earl Halfdan, and her mother was Ingibjorg, a daughter of Harald Harfager. Thereafter Eyvind made a song about King Harald :—

"Guardian of Norway, well we know
Thy heart failed not when from the bow
The piercing arrow-hail sharp rang
On shield and breast-plate, and the clang
Of sword resounded in the press
Of battle, like the splitting ice ;
For Harald, wild wolf of the wood,
Must drink his fill of foemen's blood."

Gunhild's sons resided mostly in the middle of the country, for they did not think it safe for them to dwell among the people of Throndhjem or of Viken, where King Hakon's best friends lived ; and also in both places there were many powerful men. Proposals of agreement then passed between Gunhild's sons and Earl Sigurd, for they got no scat from the Throndhjem country ; and at last an agreement was concluded between the kings and the earl, and confirmed by oath. Earl Sigurd was to get the same power in the Throndhjem land which he had possessed under King Hakon, and on that they considered themselves at peace. All Gunhild's sons had the character of being penurious ; and it was said they hid their money in the ground. Eyvind Skaldaspiller made a song about this :—

"Main-mast of battle ! Harald bold !
In Hakon's days the skald wore gold

Upon his falcon's seat ;* he wore
Rolf Krakes seed,† the yellow ore,
Sown by him as he fled away,
The avenger Adils' speed to stay.
The gold crop grows upon the plain ;
But Frode's girls so gay ‡ in vain
Grind out the golden meal, while those
Who rule o'er Norway's realm like foes,
In mother earth's old bosom hide
The wealth which Hakon far and wide
Scattered with generous hand : the sun
Shone in the days of that great one,
On the gold band of Fulla's brow,§
On gold-ringed hands that bend the bow,
On the skald's hand ; but of the ray
Of bright gold, glancing like the spray
Of sun-lit waves, no skald now sings—
Buried are golden chains and rings."

Now when King Harald heard this song, he sent a message to Eyvind to come to him, and when Eyvind came made a charge against him of being unfaithful. "And it ill becomes thee," said the king, "to be my enemy, as thou hast entered into my service." Eyvind then made these verses :—

"One lord I had before thee, Harald !
One dear-loved lord ! Now am I old,
And do not wish to change again.—
To that loved lord, through strife and pain,
Faithful I stood ; still true to Hakon, —
To my good king, and him alone.

* One of the *Edda* figures of speech for the hand.—L.

† Rolf Krake scattered gold on his flight over the Fyrisvols, to divert the pursuit of Adils' men. The meaning is, the skalds had gold rings on their fingers in Hakon's days.—L.

‡ Menia and Fenia were strong girls of the giant race, whom Frode bought in Sweden to grind gold and good luck to him ; and their meal means gold.—L.

§ Fulla was one of Frigg's attendants, who wore a gold band on the forehead ; and the figure means gold,—that the sun shone on gold rings on the hands of the skalds in Hakon's days.—L.

But now I'm old and useless grown,
My hands are empty, wealth is flown;
I am but fit for a short space
In thy court-hall to fill a place."

But King Harald forced Eyvind to submit himself to his clemency. Eyvind had a great gold ring, which was called Molde, that had been dug up out of the earth long since. This ring the king said he must have as the mulct for the offence; and there was no help for it. Then Eyvind sang:—

"I go across the ocean-foam,
Swift skating to my Iceland home
Upon the ocean-skates,* fast driven
By gales by Thurse's witch-wife given.
For from the falcon-bearing hand
Harald has plucked the gold snake band
My father wore—by lawless might
Has taken what is mine by right."

Eyvind went home; but it is not told that he ever came near the king again.†

CHAPTER II.—*Of the Christianity of Gunhild's Sons.*

Gunhild's sons embraced Christianity in England, as told before; but when they came to rule over Norway they made no progress in spreading Christianity, —only they pulled down the temples of the idols, and cast away the sacrifices where they had it in their power, and raised great animosity by doing so. The good crops of the country were soon wasted in their days, because there were many kings, and each had

* Ocean's skates,—an expression for ships.—L.

† This conflict between Harald and Eyvind is told somewhat differently in *Fagrskinna*.

his court about him. They had therefore great expenses, and were very greedy. Besides, they only observed those laws of King Hakon which suited themselves. They were, however, all of them remarkably handsome men—stout, strong, and expert in all exercises. So says Glum Geirason, in the verses he composed about Harald, Gunhild's son :—

> "The foeman's terror, Harald bold,
> Had gained enough of yellow gold;
> Had Heimdal's teeth * enough in store,
> And understood twelve arts or more."

The brothers sometimes went out on expeditions together, and sometimes each on his own account. They were fierce, but brave and active; and great warriors, and very successful.

CHAPTER III.—*Of the Councils held by Gunhild and her Sons.*

Gunhild the King-mother, and her sons, often met, and talked together upon the government of the country. Once Gunhild asked her sons what they intended to do with their kingdom of Throndhjem. "Ye have the title of king, as your forefathers had before you; but you have little land or people, and there are many to divide with. In the East, at Viken, there are Trygve and Gudrod; and they have some right, from relationship, to their

* Heimdal was one of the gods, whose horse was called Gold-top; and the horse's teeth were of gold. Heimdal's teeth is a figurative expression of the skald for gold. In the translation these figurative expressions are retained when they can be explained briefly, as they show the nature of the poetic language of the original.—L.

governments. There is besides Earl Sigurd ruling over the whole Throndhjem country; and no reason can I see why ye let so large a kingdom be ruled by an earl, and not by yourselves. It appears wonderful to me that ye go every summer upon viking cruises against other lands, and allow an earl within the country to take your father's heritage from you. Your grandfather, whose name you bear, King Harald, thought it but a small matter to take an earl's life and land when he subdued all Norway, and held it under him to old age."

Harald replied, "It is not so easy, mother, to cut off Earl Sigurd as to slay a kid or a calf. Earl Sigurd is of high birth, powerful in relations, popular, and prudent; and I think if the Throndhjem people knew for certain there was enmity between us, they would all take his side, and we could expect only evil from them. I don't think it would be safe for any of us brothers to fall into the hands of the Throndhjem people."

Then said Gunhild, "We shall go to work another way, and not put ourselves forward. Harald and Erling shall come in harvest to North More, and there I shall meet you, and we shall consult together what is to be done." This was done.

CHAPTER IV.—*The Plans of Gunhild's Sons and Griotgard.*

Earl Sigurd had a brother called Griotgard, who was much younger, and much less respected; in

fact, was held in no title of honour. He had many people, however, about him, and in summer went on viking cruises, and gathered to himself property. Now King Harald sent messengers to Throndhjem with offers of friendship, and with presents. The messengers declared that King Harald was willing to be on the same friendly terms with the earl that King Hakon had been: adding, that they wished the earl to come to King Harald, that their friendship might be put on a firm footing. The Earl Sigurd received well the king's messengers and friendly message, but said that on account of his many affairs he could not come to the king. He sent many friendly gifts, and many glad and grateful words to the king, in return for his friendship. With this reply the messengers set off, and went to Griotgard, for whom they had the same message, and brought him good presents, and offered him King Harald's friendship, and invited him to visit the king. Griotgard promised to come; and at the appointed time he paid a visit to King Harald and Gunhild, and was received in the most friendly manner. They treated him on the most intimate footing, so that Griotgard had access to their private consultations and secret councils. At last the conversation, by an understanding between the king and queen, was turned upon Earl Sigurd; and they spoke to Griotgard about the earl having kept him so long in obscurity, and asked him if he would not join the king's brothers in an attack on the earl. If he would join with them, the king promised Griotgard that he

should be his earl, and have the same government that Sigurd had. It came so far that a secret agreement was made between them, that Griotgard should spy out the most favourable opportunity of attacking by surprise Earl Sigurd, and should give King Harald notice of it. After this agreement Griotgard returned home with many good presents from the king.

CHAPTER V.—*Earl Sigurd burnt in a House in Stjoradal.*

Earl Sigurd went in harvest into Stjoradal to guest-quarters, and from thence went to Oglo to a feast. The earl usually had many people about him, for he did not trust the king; but now, after friendly messages had passed between the king and him, he had no great following of people with him. Then Griotgard sent word to the king that he could never expect a better opportunity to fall upon Earl Sigurd; and immediately, that very evening, Harald and Erling sailed into Throndhjem fiord with several ships and many people. They sailed all night by starlight, and Griotgard came out to meet them. Late in the night they came to Oglo,* where Earl Sigurd was at the feast, and set fire to the house; and burnt the house, the earl, and all his men. As soon as it was daylight they set out through the fiord, and south to More, where they remained a long time.

* The site of Oglo is not well ascertained by the Norwegian antiquaries. It is supposed to be in Skatvold, in the present Stjordal.—L.

CHAPTER VI.—*Beginning of the History of Earl Hakon, Sigurd's Son.*

Hakon, the son of Earl Sigurd, was up in the interior of the Throndhjem country when he heard this news. Great was the tumult through all the Throndhjem land, and every vessel that could swim was put into the water; and as soon as the people were gathered together they took Earl Sigurd's son Hakon to be their earl and the leader of the troops, and the whole body steered out of Throndhjem fiord. When Gunhild's sons heard of this, they set off southwards to Raumsdal and South More; and both parties kept eye on each other by their spies. Earl Sigurd was killed two years after the fall of King Hakon. So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller in the "Haleygia-tal":—

> "At Oglo, as I've heard, Earl Sigurd
> Was burnt to death by Norway's lord,—
> Sigurd, who once on Hadding's grave
> A feast to Odin's ravens gave.
> In Oglo's hall, amidst the feast,
> When bowls went round and ale flowed fast,
> He perished: Harald lit the fire
> Which burnt to death the son of Tyr."

Earl Hakon, with the help of his friends, maintained himself in the Throndhjem country for three years; and during that time [963–965] Gunhild's sons got no revenues from it. Hakon had many a battle with Gunhild's sons, and many a man lost his life on both sides. Of this Einar Skalaglam* speaks in his

* Einar Skalaglam was an Icelander who came to Norway to Hakon's court about the year 970, or soon thereafter. The *Landnama* states that he

lay, called "Vellekla," which he composed about Earl Hakon:—

"The sharp bow-shooter on the sea
Spread wide his fleet, for well loved he
The battle storm; well loved the earl
His battle-banner to unfurl.
O'er the well-trampled battle-field
He raised the red-moon of his shield;
And often dared King Eirik's son
To try the fray with the Earl Hakon."

And he also says:—

"Who is the man who'll dare to say
That Sigurd's son avoids the fray?
He gluts the raven—he ne'er fears
The arrow's song or flight of spears.
With thundering sword he storms in war,
As Odin dreadful; or from far
He makes the arrow-shower fly
To swell the sail of victory.
The victory was dearly bought,
And many a viking-fight was fought
Before the swinger of the sword
Was of the eastern country lord."

And Einar tells also how Earl Hakon avenged his father's murderer:—

was drowned in Iceland. His most famous work was *Vell-ekla* (Lack-lucre or Lack-gold). There is a pretty full account of him in *Egla*, chap. 82, and the following passage in *Jomsvikinga Saga* shows how he got the name *Skalaglam*, which means Rattle-head. We quote it from Vigfusson's *Corpus Poeticum*, vol. ii. p. 42.

"On one occasion, Einar, fancying that he was not well treated, grew angry and would not come near the earl (Hakon). The earl finding that Einar was displeased with his treatment of him, sent to bid him come and speak with him; then he took a fair pair of scales, made of pure silver and all gilt, and with them there went two weights, one of gold and the other of silver, that were made after the likeness of men, and were called 'Lots.' And this was the power that was in them:—the earl would lay them in the scales and say which one of them should come up, and if the one that he would came up, it would shake in the scale, so that 'it made a rattle.' The earl gave Einar the scales, and he was very pleased with them, and was ever afterwards called Einar *Rattle-scale* (Skalaglam).

"I praise the man, my hero he,
Who in his good ship roves the sea,
Like bird of prey, intent to win
Red vengeance for his slaughtered kin.
From his blue sword the iron rain
That freezes life poured down amain
On him who took his father's life,
On him and his men in the strife.
To Odin many a soul was driven,—
To Odin many a rich gift given.
Loud raged the storm on battle-field—
Axe rang on helm, and sword on shield."

The friends on both sides at last laid themselves between, and brought proposals of peace; for the bondes suffered by this strife and war in the land. At last it was brought to this, by the advice of prudent men, that Earl Hakon should have the same power in the Throndhjem land which his father Earl Sigurd had enjoyed; and the kings, on the other hand, should have the same dominion as King Hakon had: and this agreement was settled with the fullest promises of fidelity to it. Afterwards a great friendship arose between Earl Hakon and Gunhild, although they sometimes attempted to deceive each other. And thus matters stood for three years longer [966–968], in which time Earl Hakon sat quietly in his dominions.

CHAPTER VII.—*Of Harald Grayskin.*

King Hakon had generally his seat in Hordaland and Rogaland, and also his brothers; but very often, also, they went to Hardanger. One summer it happened that a vessel came from Iceland belonging to Icelanders, and loaded with skins and peltry. They

sailed to Hardanger, where they heard the greatest number of people were assembled; but when the folks came to deal with them, nobody would buy their skins. Then the steersman went to King Harald, whom he had been acquainted with before, and complained of his ill luck. The king promised to visit him, and did so. King Harald was very condescending, and full of fun. He came with a fully manned boat, looked at the skins, and then said to the steersman, "Wilt thou give me a present of one of these gray-skins?" * "Willingly," said the steersman, "if it were ever so many." On this the king wrapped himself up in a gray-skin, and went back to his boat; but before they rowed away from the ship, every man in his suite bought such another skin as the king wore for himself. In a few days so many people came to buy skins, that not half of them could be served with what they wanted; and thereafter the king was called Harald Grayskin.

CHAPTER VIII.—*Earl Eirik's Birth.*

Earl Hakon came one winter to the Uplands to a feast, and it so happened that he had intercourse with a girl of mean birth. Some time after the girl had to prepare for her confinement; and she bore a child, a boy, who had water poured on him, and was named Eirik. The mother carried the boy to Earl Hakon,

* It is not clear that the "gray-skins" of this story were wolves' skins. It is likely they were fox or seal skins. The wolf is not found in Iceland.—L.

and said that he was the father. The earl placed him to be brought up with a man called Thorleif the Wise, who dwelt in Medaldal,* and was a rich and powerful man, and a great friend of the earl. Eirik gave hopes very early that he would become an able man, was handsome in countenance, and stout and strong for a child; but the earl did not pay much attention to him. The earl himself was one of the handsomest men in countenance,—not tall, but very strong, and well practised in all kinds of exercises; and withal prudent, of good understanding, and a deadly man at arms.

Chapter IX.—*King Trygve Olafson's Murder.*

It happened one harvest that Earl Hakon, on a journey in the Uplands, came to Hedemark; and King Trygve Olafson and King Gudrod Biornson met him there, and Dale-Gudbrand also came to the meeting. They had agreed to meet, and they talked together long by themselves; but so much only was known of their business, that they were to be friends of each other. They parted, and each went home to his own kingdom. Gunhild and her sons came to hear of this meeting, and they suspected it must have been to lay a treasonable plot against the kings; and they often talked of this among themselves. When spring began to set in, King Harald and his brother King Gudrod proclaimed that they were to make a viking cruise, as usual, either in the West sea, or the

* Now called Meldal.

Baltic. The people accordingly assembled, launched the ships into the sea, and made themselves ready to sail. When they were drinking the farewell ale,—and they drank bravely,—much and many things were talked over at the drink-table, and, among other things, were comparisons between different men, and at last between the kings themselves. One said that King Harald excelled his brothers by far, and in every way. On this King Gudrod was very angry, and said that he was in no respect behind Harald, and was ready to prove it. Instantly both parties were so inflamed that they challenged each other to battle, and ran to their arms. But some of the guests who were less drunk, and had more understanding, came between them, and quieted them; and each went to his ship, but nobody expected that they would all sail together. Gudrod sailed eastward along the land, and Harald went out to sea, saying he would go to the westward; but when he came outside of the islands he steered east along the coast, outside of the rocks and isles. Gudrod, again, sailed inside, through the usual channel, to Viken, and eastwards to Folden. He then sent a message to King Trygve to meet him, that they might make a cruise together in summer in the Baltic to plunder. Trygve accepted willingly, and as a friend, the invitation; and as he heard King Gudrod had but few people with him, he came to meet him with a single boat. They met at Veggen, to the east of Sotanes; but just as they were come to the meeting place, Gudrod's men

ran up and killed King Trygve and twelve men. He lies buried at a place called Trygve's Cairn.*

Chapter X.—*King Gudrod's Fall.*

King Harald sailed far outside of the rocks and isles; but set his course to Viken, and came in the night-time to Tunsberg, and heard that Gudrod Biornson was at a feast a little way up the country. Then King Harald set out immediately with his followers, came in the night, and surrounded the house. King Gudrod Biornson went out with his people; but after a short resistance he fell, and many men with him. Then King Harald joined his brother King Gudrod, and they subdued all Viken.

Chapter XI.—*Of Harald Grenske.*

King Gudrod Biornson had made a good and suitable marriage, and had by his wife a son called Harald, who had been sent to be fostered to Grenland † to a lenderman called Hroe the White. Hroe's son, called Hrane the Far-travelled, was Harald's foster-brother, and about the same age. After his father Gudrod's fall, Harald, who was called Grenske, fled to the Uplands, and with him his foster-brother Hrane, and a few people. Harald stayed a while there among his relations; but as Eirik's sons sought after every man who interfered with them, and especially those who might oppose them, Harald Grenske's

* In Snorre Tryggvahreyr.

† The present Thelemark region.

friends and relations advised him to leave the country. Harald therefore went westward into Svithiod, and sought shipmates, that he might enter into company with those who went out a cruising to gather property. Harald became in this way a remarkably able man. There was a man in Svithiod at that time called Toste, one of the most powerful and clever in the land among those who had no high name or dignity; and he was a great warrior, who had been often in battle, and was therefore called Skoglar-Toste.* Harald Grenske came into his company, and cruised with Toste in summer; and wherever Harald came he was well thought of by every one. In the winter Harald, after passing two years in the Uplands, took up his abode with Toste, and lived five years with him. Toste had a daughter, who was both young and handsome, but she was proud and high-minded. She was called Sigrid, and was afterwards married to the Swedish king, Eirik the Victorious, and had a son by him, called Olaf the Swede, who was afterwards king of Svithiod. King Eirik died in a sick-bed at Upsala ten years after the death of Styrbiorn.

CHAPTER XII.—*Earl Hakon's Feuds.*

Gunhild's sons levied a great army in Viken, and sailed along the land northwards, collecting people and ships on the way out of every district. They then made known their intent, to proceed north-

* From the valkyrie or companion of Odin called Skogul. Therefore Skoglar-Toste was the warlike Toste.—L.

wards with their army against Earl Hakon in Throndhjem. When Earl Hakon heard this news, he also collected men, and fitted out ships; and when he heard what an overwhelming force Gunhild's sons had with them, he steered south with his fleet to More, pillaging wherever he came, and killing many people. He then sent the whole of the bonde army back to Throndhjem; but he himself, with his men-at-arms, proceeded by both the districts of More and Raumsdal, and had his spies out to the south of Stad to spy the army of Gunhild's sons; and when he heard they were come into the Fiords, and were waiting for a fair wind to sail northwards round Stad, Earl Hakon set out to sea from the north side of Stad, so far that his sails could not be seen from the land, and then sailed eastward on a line with the coast, and came to Denmark, from whence he sailed into the Baltic, and pillaged there during the summer. Gunhild's sons conducted their army north to Throndhjem, and remained there the whole summer collecting the scat and duties. But when summer was advanced they left Sigurd Sleva and Gudrod behind; and the other brothers returned eastward with the levied army they had taken up in summer.

Chapter XIII.—*Of Earl Hakon and Gunhild's sons.*

Earl Hakon, towards harvest, sailed into the Bothnian Gulf to Helsingjaland, drew his ships up there on the beach, and took the land-ways through

Helsingjaland and Jamtaland, and so eastwards round the dividing ridge (the Kiol, or keel of the country), and down into the Throndhjem district. Many people streamed towards him, and he fitted out ships. When the sons of Gunhild heard of this, they got on board their ships, and sailed out of the Fiord; and Earl Hakon came to his seat at Lade, and remained there all winter. The sons of Gunhild, on the other hand, occupied More; and they and the earl attacked each other in turns, killing each other's people. Earl Hakon kept his dominions of Throndhjem, and was there generally in the winter; but in summer he sometimes went to Helsingjaland, where he went on board of his ships and sailed with them down into the Baltic, and plundered there; and sometimes he remained in Throndhjem, and kept an army on foot, so that Gunhild's sons could get no hold northwards of Stad.

CHAPTER XIV.—*Sigurd Sleva's Murder.*

One summer Harald Grayskin with his troops went north to Biarmeland,* where he forayed, and fought a great battle with the inhabitants on the banks of the Dwina. King Harald gained the victory, killed many people, plundered and wasted and burned far and wide in the land, and made enormous booty. Glum Geirason tells of it thus:—

"I saw the hero Harald chase
With bloody sword Biarme's race:

* The coast of the White Sea. This name is supposed to be still retained in the name Permia given to this province.—L.

They fly before him through the night,
All by their burning city's light.
On Dwina's bank, at Harald's word,
Arose the storm of spear and sword.
In such a wild war-cruise as this,
Great would he be who could bring peace."

King Sigurd Sleva came to the Herse * Klyp's house. Klyp was a son of Thord, and a grandson of Hordakare, and was a man of power and great family. He was not at home; but his wife Alof gave a good reception to the king, and made a great feast at which there was much drinking. Alof was a daughter of Asbiorn, and sister to Jernskiegge,† north in Yrjar. Asbiorn's brother was called Hreidar, who was father to Styrkar, whose son was Eindride, father of Einar Tambaskielver. In the night the king went to bed to Alof against her will, and then set out on his journey. The harvest thereafter, King Harald and his brother King Sigurd Sleva went to Vors,‡ and summoned the bondes to a Thing. There the bondes fell on them, and would have killed them, but they escaped and took different roads. King Harald went to Hardanger, but King Sigurd to Alrekstad. Now when the Herse Klyp heard of this, he and his relations assembled to attack the king; and Vemund Volubriot§ was chief of their troop. Now when they came to the house they attacked the king, and Herse Klyp, it is said, ran him through with his sword and

* Herse,—a title like Sir or Sira.—L.
† Jernskiegge,—iron-beard.—L.
‡ Now Vos, east of Bergen.
§ Volubrjótr,—literally the one who breaks the vala, that is, breaks the skulls of witches

killed him; but instantly Klyp was killed on the spot by Erling Gamle [965].

CHAPTER XV.—*Griotgard's Fall.*

King Harald Grayskin and his brother King Gudrod gathered together a great army in the east country, with which they set out northwards to Throndhjem [968]. When Earl Hakon heard of it he collected men, and set out to More, where he plundered. There his father's brother, Griotgard, had the command and defence of the country on account of Gunhild's sons, and he assembled an army by order of the kings. Earl Hakon advanced to meet him, and gave him battle; and there fell Griotgard and two other earls, and many a man besides. So says Einar Skalaglam:—

"The helm-crown'd Hakon, brave as stout,
Again has put his foes to rout.
The bowl runs o'er with Odin's mead,*
That fires the skald when mighty deed
Has to be sung. Earl Hakon's sword,
In single combat, as I've heard,
Three sons of earls from this one fray
To dwell with Odin drove away."†

Thereafter Earl Hakon went out to sea, and sailed outside the coast, and came to Denmark. He went to the Danish king, Harald Gormson, and was well received by him, and stayed with him all winter [969]. At that time there was also with the Danish king a man called Harald, a son of Knut Gormson, and a

* Odin's mead, called Bodn, was the blood or mead the sons of Brage, the god of poets, drank to inspire them.—L.

† To dwell with Odin,—viz. slew them.—L.

brother's son of King Harald. He was lately come home from a long viking cruise, on which he had gathered great riches, and therefore he was called Gold Harald. He thought he had a good chance of coming to the Danish kingdom.

CHAPTER XVI.—*King Erling's Fall.*

King Harald Grayskin and his brothers proceeded northwards to Throndhjem, where they met no opposition. They levied the scat-duties, and all other revenues, and laid heavy penalties upon the bondes; for the kings had for a long time received but little income from Throndhjem, because Earl Hakon was there with many troops, and was at variance with these kings. In autumn King Harald went south with the greater part of the men-at-arms, but King Erling remained behind with his men. He raised great contributions from the bondes, and pressed severely on them; at which the bondes murmured greatly, and submitted to their losses with impatience. In winter they gathered together in a great force to go against King Erling, just as he was at a feast; and they gave battle to him, and he with the most of his men fell [969].

CHAPTER XVII.—*Of the Seasons in Norway at this time.*

While Gunhild's sons reigned in Norway the seasons were always bad, and the longer they reigned the worse were the crops; and the bondes laid the

blame on them. They were very greedy, and used the bondes harshly. It came at length to be so bad that fish, as well as corn, were wanting. In Halogaland there was the greatest famine and distress; for scarcely any corn grew, and even snow was lying, and the cattle were bound in the byres * all over the country until midsummer. Eyvind Skaldaspiller describes it in his poem, as he came outside of his house and found a thick snow-drift at that season :—

"'Tis midsummer, yet deep snows rest
On Odin's mother's frozen breast:
Like Laplanders, our cattle-kind
In stall or stable we must bind."

CHAPTER XVIII.—*Of the Icelanders and Eyvind Skaldaspiller.*

Eyvind composed a poem about the people of Iceland, for which they rewarded him by each bonde giving him three silver pennies, of full weight and white in the fracture.† And when the silver was brought together at the Althing, the people resolved to have it purified, and made into a row of clasps; and after the workmanship of the silver was paid, the row of clasps was valued at fifty marks. This they sent to Eyvind; but Eyvind was obliged to separate the clasps from each other, and sell them to buy food for his household. But the same spring a

* Byres = gards or farms.

† These are curious circumstances of the importance of the art of the skald in the estimation of the Iceland people, of the state of their money, and of their dress. The row of clasps was probably similar to the rows of buttons still used by the Friesland fishermen for ornaments on their jackets.—L.

shoal of herrings set in upon the fishing ground beyond the coast-side, and Eyvind manned a ship's boat with his house servants and cottars, and rowed to where the herrings were come, and sang:—

"Now let the steed of ocean bound
O'er the North Sea with dashing sound;
Let nimble tern and screaming gull
Fly round and round—our net is full.
Fain would I know if Fortune sends
A like provision to my friends.
Welcome provision 'tis, I wot,
That the whale drives to our cook's pot."

So entirely were his moveable goods exhausted, that he was obliged to sell his arrows to buy herrings, or other meat for his table:—

"Our arms and ornaments of gold
To buy us food we gladly sold:
The arrows of the bow gave we
For the bright arrows of the sea." *

* Herrings, from their swift darting along, are called the arrows of the sea; and there is a play upon the words pila (arrows) and sil (herrings), as being similar somewhat in sound.—L.

VI.

KING OLAF TRYGVESON'S SAGA.*

INTRODUCTORY.

HITHERTO the narrative has been more or less fragmentary. With Olaf Trygveson's Saga reliable history begins, and the narration is full and connected. The story of Hakon the earl is incorporated in this saga.

Accounts of Olaf Trygveson may be found in Od the Monk's legendary saga, in parts of *Agrip*, Historia Norvegiæ, and in Thjodrek. Icelandic works on this epoch are:—

Egla, Eyrbyggja, Finboga, Floamanna, Færeyinga, Hallfredar Saga, Havardar Saga, Are's Islendinga-bok, Kristni Saga, Laxdæla, Ljosvetinga, Njala, Orkneyinga, Viga Glums Saga, and Viga Styrs Saga.

The skalds are:—Eyvind Finson, Einar Skalaglam, Tind Halkelson, Skafte Thorodson, Eyjolf Dadaskald, Thorfin Mun, Eilif Gudrunson, Hallarstein, Vigfus Viga-Glumson, Thorleif Hakonskald, Hvam Kalf, Halfred Vandredaskald, Bjarne Gulbraskald, Gissur Gulbraskald, Sigvat Thordsonskald, and Thord Kolbeinson.

CHAPTER I.—*Olaf Trygveson's Birth.*

King Trygve Olafson had married a wife who was called Astrid. She was a daughter of Eirik Biodaskalle, a great man, who dwelt at Ofrustad. But after Trygve's death [963] Astrid fled, and privately took with her all the loose property she could. Her foster-father, Thorolf Lusarskeg, followed her, and

* Olaf Trygveson reigned from about the year 995 to the year 1000.—L.

never left her; and others of her faithful followers spied about to discover her enemies, and where they were. Astrid was pregnant with a child of King Trygve, and she went to a lake, and concealed herself in a holm or small island in it with a few men. Here her child was born, and it was a boy; and water was poured over it, and it was called Olaf after the grandfather.* Astrid remained all summer here in concealment; but when the nights became dark, and the day began to shorten and the weather to be cold, she was obliged to take to the land, along with Thorolf and a few other men. They did not seek for houses unless in the night-time, when they came to them secretly; and they spoke to nobody. One evening, towards dark, they came to Ofrustad, where Astrid's father Eirik dwelt, and privately sent a man to Eirik to tell him; and Eirik took them to an out-house, and spread a table for them with the best of food. When Astrid had been here a short time her travelling attendants left her, and none remained behind with her but two servant girls, her child Olaf, Thorolf Lusarskeg, and his son Thorgils, who was six years old; and they remained all winter [964].

CHAPTER II.—*Of Gunhild's Sons.*

After Trygve Olafson's murder, Harald Grayskin and his brother Gudrod went to the farm which he

* King Olaf, it will be remembered, was one of Harald Harfager's sons; King Trygve Olafson was the son of this Olaf, and this Olaf Trygveson the son of Trygve.—L.

owned; but Astrid was gone, and they could learn no tidings of her. A loose report came to their ears that she was pregnant to King Trygve; but they went away northwards, as before related.* As soon as they met their mother Gunhild, they told her all that had taken place. She inquired particularly about Astrid, and they told her the report they had heard; but as Gunhild's sons the same harvest and winter after had bickerings with Earl Hakon, as before related, they did not seek after Astrid and her son that winter.

CHAPTER III.—*Astrid's Journey.*

The spring after Gunhild sent spies to the Uplands, and all the way down to Viken, to spy what they could about Astrid; and her men came back, and could only tell her that Astrid must be with her father Eirik, and it was probable was bringing up her infant, the son of Trygve. Then Gunhild, without delay, sent off men well furnished with arms and horses, and in all a troop of thirty; and as their leader she sent a particular friend of her own, a powerful man called Hakon.† Her orders were to go to Ofrustad to Eirik, and take King Trygve's son from thence, and bring the child to her; and with these orders the men went out. Now when they were come to the neighbourhood of Ofrustad, some of Eirik's friends observed the troop of travellers, and

* In Harald Grayskin's Saga, chapter 12.

† According to the authority of Od the Monk and Thjodrek, this was none other than Earl Hakon. But he had, as we read above, been bickering with Gunhild's sons: this is hardly probable.

about the close of the day brought him word of their approach. Eirik immediately, in the night, made preparation for Astrid's flight, gave her good guides, and sent her away eastward to Svithiod, to his good friend Hakon Gamle, who was a powerful man there. Long before day they departed, and towards evening they reached a domain called Skaun. Here they saw a large mansion, towards which they went, and begged a night's lodging. For the sake of concealment they were clad in mean clothing. There dwelt here a bonde called Biorn Eiterkveisa, who was very rich, but very inhospitable. He drove them away; and therefore, towards dark, they went to another domain close by that was called Vidar. Thorstein was the name of the bonde; and he gave them lodging, and took good care of them, so that they slept well, and were well entertained. Early that morning Gunhild's men had come to Ofrustad, and inquired for Astrid and her son. As Eirik told them she was not there, they searched the whole house, and remained till late in the day before they got any news of Astrid. Then they rode after her the way she had taken, and late at night they came to Biorn Eiterkveisa in Skaun, and took up their quarters there. Hakon asked Biorn if he knew anything about Astrid, and he said some people had been there in the evening wanting lodgings; "but I drove them away, and I suppose they have gone to some of the neighbouring houses." Thorstein's labourer was coming from the forest, having left his work at nightfall, and called in at Biorn's house because it was in

his way; and finding there were guests come to the house, and learning their business, he comes to Thorstein and tells him of it. As about a third part of the night was still remaining, Thorstein wakens his guests and orders them in an angry voice to go about their business; but as soon as they were out of the house upon the road, Thorstein tells them that Gunhild's messengers were at Biorn's house, and are upon the trace of them. They entreat of him to help them, and he gave them a guide and some provisions. He conducted them through a forest to a lake, in which there was an islet overgrown with reeds. They waded out to the islet, and hid themselves among the reeds. Early in the morning Hakon rode away from Biorn's into the township, and wherever he came he asked after Astrid; and when he came to Thorstein's he asked if she had been there. He said that some people had been there; but as soon as it was daylight they had set off again, eastwards, to the forest. Hakon made Thorstein go along with them, as he knew all the roads and hiding-places. Thorstein went with them; but when they were come into the woods, he led them right across the way Astrid had taken. They went about and about the whole day to no purpose, as they could find no trace of her; so they turned back to tell Gunhild the end of their travel. Astrid and her friends proceeded on their journey, and came to Svithiod, to Hakon Gamle (the Old), where she and her son remained a long time, and had friendly welcome.*

* According to *Historia Norvegiæ* Olaf was born on the Orkneys, but

CHAPTER IV.—*Hakon's Embassy to Sweden.*

When Gunhild, the mother of the kings, heard that Astrid and her son Olaf were in the kingdom of Svithiod, she again sent Hakon, with a good attendance, eastward, to Eirik king of Sweden, with presents and messages of friendship. The ambassadors were well received and well treated. Hakon, after a time, disclosed his errand to the king, saying that Gunhild had sent him with the request that the king would assist him in getting hold of Olaf Trygveson, to conduct him to Norway, where Gunhild would bring him up. The king gave Hakon people with him, and he rode with them to Hakon the Old, where Hakon desired, with many friendly expressions, that Olaf should go with him. Hakon the Old returned a friendly answer, saying that it depended entirely upon Olaf's mother. But Astrid would on no account listen to the proposal; and the messengers had to return as they came, and to tell Eing Eirik how the matter stood. The ambassadors then prepared to return home, and asked the king for some assistance to take the boy, whether Hakon the Old would or not. The king gave them again some attendants; and when they came to Hakon the Old, they again asked for the boy, and on his refusal to deliver him they used high words and threatened violence. But one of the slaves, Buste by name, attacked Hakon, and

was afterwards, on account of Earl Hakon's persecutions, carried to Sweden, Esthonia, and Russia. *Agrip* makes Astrid take her son three years old to the Orkneys, whence he is secretly sent to Sweden and further east.

was going to kill him; and they barely escaped from the thralls without a cudgelling, and proceeded home to Norway to tell Gunhild their ill success, and that they had only seen Olaf.

CHAPTER V.—*Of Sigurd Eirikson.*

Astrid had a brother called Sigurd, a son of Eirik Biodaskalle, who had long been abroad in Russia with King Valdemar,* and was there in great consideration. Astrid had now a great inclination to travel to her brother there. Hakon the Old gave her good attendants, and what was needful for the journey, and she set out with some merchants. She had then been two years with Hakon the Old, and Olaf was three years of age. As they sailed out into the Baltic, they were captured by vikings of Esthonia, who made booty both of the people and goods, killing some, and dividing others as slaves. Olaf was separated from his mother, and an Esthonian man called Klerkon got him as his share along with Thorolf and Thorgils. Klerkon thought that Thorolf was too old for a slave, and that there was not much work to be got out of him, so he killed him; but took the boys with him, and sold them to a man called Klerk for a stout and good ram. A third man, called Reas,

* According to Russian authorities cited by Hildebrand, Valdemar or Vladimir became king in Holmgard (Novgorod) in 970, after his father Svjetoslev; and ruled until 977, after which time he was in exile, until 980, when upon the fall of his brother he became king in Kiew. Consequently Valdemar was not king when Olaf came there, and that Sigurd had been there long is either an exaggeration, or he must have been with Valdemar before the latter ascended the throne. See Hildebrand's *Heimskringla*, p. 167 of vol. 1.

bought Olaf for a good cloak. Reas had a wife called Rekon, and a son by her whose name was Rekone. Olaf was long with them, was treated well, and was much beloved by the people. Olaf was six years in Esthonia in this banishment [967–972].

CHAPTER VI.—*Olaf is set free in Esthonia.*

Sigurd, the son of Eirik (Astrid's brother), came into Esthonia from Novgorod,* on King Valdemar's business to collect the king's taxes and rents. Sigurd came as a man of consequence, with many followers and great magnificence. In the market-place he happened to observe a remarkably handsome boy; and as he could distinguish that he was a foreigner, he asked him his name and family. He answered him, that his name was Olaf; that he was a son of Trygve Olafson; and Astrid, a daughter of Eirik Biodaskalle, was his mother. Then Sigurd knew that the boy was his sister's son, and asked him how he came there. Olaf told him minutely all his adventures, and Sigurd told him to follow him to the peasant Reas. When he came there he bought both the boys, Olaf and Thorgils, and took them with him to Novgorod. But, for the first, he made nothing known of Olaf's relationship to him, but treated him well.

CHAPTER VII.—*Klerkon killed by Olaf.*

Olaf Trygveson was one day in the market-place, where there was a great number of people.

* Called in the old Norse *Holmgard.*

He recognised Klerkon again, who had killed his foster-father Thorolf Lusarskeg. Olaf had a little axe in his hand, and with it he clove Klerkon's skull down to the brain, and ran home to his lodging, and told his friend Sigurd what he had done. Sigurd immediately took Olaf to Queen Allogia's * house, told her what had happened, and begged her to protect the boy. She replied, that the boy appeared far too comely to allow him to be slain; and she ordered her people to be drawn out fully armed. In Novgorod, the sacredness of peace is so respected, that it is law there to slay whoever puts a man to death except by judgment of law; and, according to this law and usage, the whole people stormed and sought after the boy. It was reported that he was in the Queen's house, and that there was a number of armed men there. When this was told to the king, he went there with his people, but would allow no bloodshed. It was settled at last in peace, that the king should name the fine for the murder; and the queen paid it. Olaf remained afterwards with the queen, and was much beloved. It is a law at Novgorod, that no man of a royal descent shall stay there without the king's permission. Sigurd therefore told the queen of what family Olaf was, and for what reason he had come to Russia; namely, that he could not remain with safety in his own country: and begged her to speak to the king about it. She did so, and begged the king to help a king's son whose fate had been so hard; and

* Allogia may be a corruption of Olga, and the latter is identical with Helga.

in consequence of her entreaty the king promised to assist him, and accordingly he received Olaf into his court, and treated him nobly, and as a king's son. Olaf was nine years old when he came to Russia, and he remained nine years more [973-981] with King Valdemar. Olaf was the handsomest of men, very stout and strong, and in all bodily exercises he excelled every Northman that ever was heard of.

CHAPTER VIII.—*Of Hakon Earl of Lade.*

Earl Hakon, Sigurd's son, was with the Danish king, Harald Gormson, the winter after he had fled from Norway before Gunhild's sons. During the winter [969] the earl had so much care and sorrow that he took to bed, and passed many sleepless nights, and ate and drank no more than was needful to support his strength. Then he sent a private message to his friends north in Throndhjem, and proposed to them that they should kill King Erling, if they had an opportunity; adding, that he would come to them in summer. The same winter the Throndhjem people accordingly, as before related, killed King Erling.* There was great friendship between Earl Hakon and Gold Harald, and Harald told Hakon all his intentions. He told him that he was tired of a ship-life, and wanted to settle on the land; and asked Hakon if he thought his brother King Harald would agree to divide the kingdom with him if he asked it. "I think," replied Hakon, "that the Danish king would

* Harald Grayskin's Saga, chapter 16.

not deny thy right; but the best way to know is to speak to the king himself. I know for certain so much, that you will not get a kingdom if you don't ask for it." Soon after this conversation Gold Harald spoke to the king about the matter, in the presence of many great men who were friends to both; and Gold Harald asked King Harald to divide the kingdom with him in two equal parts, to which his royal birth and the custom of the Danish monarchy gave him right. The king was highly incensed at this demand, and said that no man had asked his father Gorm * to be king over half of Denmark, nor yet his grandfather King Hordaknut, or Sigurd Orm, or Ragnar Lodbrok; and he was so exasperated and angry, that nobody ventured to speak of it to him.

CHAPTER IX.—*Of Gold Harald.*

Gold Harald was now worse off than before; for he had got no kingdom, and had got the king's anger by proposing it. He went as usual to his friend Hakon, and complained to him of his fate, and asked for good advice, and if he could help him to get his share of the kingdom; saying that he would rather try force, and the chance of war, than give it up.

Hakon advised him not to speak to any man so that this should be known; "for," said he, "it concerns thy life: and rather consider with thyself what thou art man enough to undertake; for to accomplish

* His father was Knut, surnamed Danast, that is, the favourite of the Danes. His brother Harald Gormson is suspected of having killed him.

such a purpose requires a bold and firm man, who will neither stick at good nor evil to do that which is intended; for to take up great resolutions, and then to lay them aside, would only end in dishonour."

Gold Harald replies,—"I will so carry on what I begin, that I will not hesitate to kill Harald with my own hands, if I can come thereby to the kingdom he denies me, and which is mine by right." And so they separated.

Now King Harald comes also to Earl Hakon, and tells him the demand on his kingdom which Gold Harald had made, and also his answer, and that he would upon no account consent to diminish his kingdom. "And if Gold Harald persists in his demand, I will have no hesitation in having him killed; for I will not trust him if he does not renounce it."

The earl answered,—"My thoughts are, that Harald has carried his demand so far that he cannot now let it drop, and I expect nothing but war in the land; and that he will be able to gather a great force, because his father was so beloved. And then it would be a great enormity if you were to kill your relation; for, as things now stand, all men would say that he was innocent. But I am far from saying, or advising, that you should make yourself a smaller king than your father Gorm was, who in many ways enlarged, but never diminished his kingdom."

The king replies,—"What then is your advice,—if I am neither to divide my kingdom, nor to get rid of my fright and danger?"

"Let us meet again in a few days," said Earl

Hakon, "and I will then have considered the matter well, and will give you my advice upon it."

The king then went away with his people.

CHAPTER X.—*Councils held by Earl Hakon and King Harald.*

Earl Hakon had now great reflection, and many opinions to weigh, and he let only very few be in the house with him. In a few days King Harald came again to the earl to speak with him, and ask if he had yet considered fully the matter they had been talking of.

"I have," said the earl, "considered it night and day ever since, and find it most advisable that you retain and rule over the whole of your kingdom just as your father left it; but that you obtain for your relation Harald another kingdom, that he also may enjoy honour and dignity."

"What kind of kingdom is that," said the king, "which I can give to Harald, that I may possess Denmark entire?"

"It is Norway," said the earl. "The kings who are there are oppressive to the people of the country, so that every man is against them who has tax or service to pay."

The king replies,—"Norway is a large country, and the people fierce, and not good to attack with a foreign army. We found that sufficiently when Hakon defended that country; for we lost many people, and gained no victory. Besides, Harald the

son of Eirik is my foster-son, and has sat on my knee."

The earl answers,—"I have long known that you have helped Gunhild's sons with your force, and a bad return you have got for it; but we shall get at Norway much more easily than by fighting for it with all the Danish force. Send a message to your foster-son Harald, Eirik's son, and offer him the lands and fiefs which Gunhild's sons held before in Denmark. Appoint him a meeting, and Gold Harald will soon conquer for himself a kingdom in Norway from Harald Grayskin."

The king replies, that it would be called a bad business to deceive his own foster-son.

"The Danes," answered the earl, "will rather say that it was better to kill a Norwegian viking than a Danish, and your own brother's son."

They spoke so long over the matter, that they agreed on it.

CHAPTER XI.—*King Harald Gormson's Message to Norway.*

Thereafter Gold Harald had a conference with Earl Hakon; and the earl told him he had now advanced his business so far, that there was hope a kingdom might stand open for him in Norway. "We can then continue," said he, "our ancient friendship, and I can be of the greatest use to you in Norway. Take first that kingdom. King Harald is now very old, and has but one son, and cares but little about him, as he is but the son of a concubine."

The earl talked so long to Gold Harald that the project pleased him well; and the king, the earl, and Gold Hakon often talked over the business together. The Danish king then sent messengers north to Norway to Harald Grayskin, and fitted them out magnificently for their journey. They were well received by Harald. The messengers told him that Earl Hakon was in Denmark, but was lying dangerously sick, and almost out of his senses. They then delivered from Harald, the Danish king, the invitation to Harald Grayskin, his foster-son, to come to him, and receive investiture of the fiefs he and his brothers before him had formerly held in Denmark; and appointing a meeting in Jutland. Harald Grayskin laid the matter before his mother and other friends. Their opinions were divided. Some thought that the expedition was not without its danger, on account of the men with whom they had to deal; but the most were in haste to begin the journey, for at that time there was such a famine in Norway that the kings could scarcely feed their men-at-arms: and on this account the Fiord, on which the kings resided, usually got the name of Hardanger (Hard-acre).* In Denmark, on the other hand, there had been tolerably good crops; so that people thought that if King Harald got fiefs, and something to rule over there, they would get some assistance. It was therefore concluded, before the messengers returned,

* Anger means a bay. Snorre's etymology is incorrect. Hard is not from the Icelandic *hardr*—hard, but the name of a clan. Hard-anger means the bay of the Hards.

that Harald should travel to Denmark to the Danish king in summer, and accept the conditions King Harald offered.

CHAPTER XII.—*Treachery of King Harald and Earl Hakon towards Gold Harald.*

Harald Grayskin went to Denmark in the summer [969] with three long-ships; and Herse Arinbiorn, from the Fiord district, commanded one of them. King Harald sailed from Viken over to Limfiord in Jutland, and landed at the narrow neck of land* where the Danish king was expected. Now when Gold Harald heard of this, he sailed there with nine ships which he had fitted out before for a viking cruise. Earl Hakon had also his war force on foot; namely, twelve large ships, all ready, with which he proposed to make an expedition. When Gold Harald had departed Earl Hakon says to the king, "Now I don't know if we are not sailing on an expedition, and yet are to pay the penalty of not having joined it. Gold Harald may kill Harald Grayskin, and get the kingdom of Norway; but you must not think he will be true to you, although you do help him to so much power, for he told me in winter that he would take your life if he could find opportunity to do so. Now I will win Norway for you, and kill Gold Harald, if you will promise me a good condition under you.

* Limfiord, running in from the Baltic across the peninsula of Jutland, is only divided by a narrow neck of land from the North Sea. This neck has within these fifteen years been washed away, and there is now a channel into the Baltic by this new passage for small craft. The narrow neck of land is called by Snorre Hals.—L.

I will be your earl; swear an oath of fidelity to you, and, with your help, conquer all Norway for you; hold the country under your rule; pay you the scat and taxes; and you will be a greater king than your father, as you will have two kingdoms under you." The king and the earl agreed upon this, and Hakon set off to seek Gold Harald.

CHAPTER XIII.—*Harald Grayskin falls at the neck of land at Limfiord.*

Gold Harald came to the neck of land at Limfiord, and immediately challenged Harald Grayskin to battle; and although Harald had fewer men, he went immediately on the land, prepared for battle, and drew up his troops. Before the lines came together Harald Grayskin urged on his men, and told them to draw their swords. He himself advanced the foremost of the troop, hewing down on each side. So says Glum Geirason, in Grayskin's lay:—

"Brave were thy words in battle-field,
Thou stainer of the snow-white shield!—
Thou gallant war-god! With thy voice
Thou couldst the dying man rejoice:
The cheer of Harald could impart
Courage and life to every heart.
While swinging high the blood-smeared sword,
By arm and voice we knew our lord."

There fell Harald Grayskin. So says Glum Geirason:—

"On Limfiord's strand, by the tide's flow,
Stern Fate has laid King Harald low;

The gallant viking-cruiser—he
Who loved the isle-encircling sea.
The generous ruler of the land
Fell at the narrow Limfiord strand,
Enticed by Hakon's cunning speech
To his death-bed on Limfiord's beach."

The most of King Harald's men fell with him. There also fell Herse Arinbiorn.

This happened fifteen years * after the death of Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, and thirteen years after that of Sigurd earl of Lade. The priest Are Frode says that Earl Hakon was thirteen years earl over his father's dominions in Throndhjem district before the fall of Harald Grayskin; but, for the last six years of Harald Grayskin's life, Are Frode says the Earl Hakon and Gunhild's sons fought against each other, and drove each other out of the land in turns.

CHAPTER XIV.—*Gold Harald's Death.*

Soon after Harald Grayskin's fall, Earl Hakon came up to Gold Harald, and the earl immediately gave battle to Harald. Hakon gained the victory, and Harald was made prisoner; but Hakon had him immediately hanged on a gallows. Hakon then went to the Danish king, and no doubt easily settled with him for the killing his relative Gold Harald.

* According to Snorre and Are Frode, Harald Grayskin ruled fifteen years, but according to Sæmund Frode, he ruled only nine years. Vigfusson, Hildebrand, and other recent authorities have adopted Sæmund's statement, and this gives us 969 as the year of Harald Grayskin's death.

CHAPTER XV.—*Division of the Country.*

Soon after King Harald Gormson ordered a levy of men over all his kingdom, and sailed with 600 ships.* There were with him Earl Hakon, Harald Grenske, a son of King Gudrod, and many other great men who had fled from their udal estates in Norway on account of Gunhild's sons. The Danish king sailed with his fleet from the south to Viken, where all the people of the country surrendered to him. When he came to Tunsberg swarms of people joined him; and King Harald gave to Earl Hakon the command of all the men who came to him in Norway, and gave him the government over Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn, Fiord-district, South More, Raumsdal, and North More. These seven districts gave King Harald to Earl Hakon to rule over, with the same rights as Harald Harfager gave with them to his sons; only with the difference, that Hakon should there, as well as in Throndhjem, have the king's land-estates and land-tax, and use the king's money and goods according to his necessities whenever there was war in the country. King Harald also gave Harald Grenske Vingulmark, Vestfold, and Agder all the way to the Naze,† together with the title of king; and let him have these dominions with the same rights as his family in former times had held them, and as Harald Harfager had given

* *I.e.*, 720 ships, as they were counted by long hundreds, 100 = 120.

† The Naze is the most southern headland of Norway. Its name in Snorre is Lidandisnes, and it is now called in Norway Lindesnæs.

with them to his sons. Harald Grenske was then eighteen years old, and he became afterwards a celebrated man. Harald king of Denmark returned home thereafter with all his army.

CHAPTER XVI.—*Gunhild's Sons leave the Country.*

Earl Hakon proceeded northwards along the coast with his force; and when Gunhild and her sons got the tidings they proceeded to gather troops, but were ill off for men. Then they took the same resolution as before, to sail out to sea with such men as would follow them away to the westward. They came first to the Orkney Islands, and remained there a while. There were in Orkney then the Earls Hlodver, Arnfid, Ljot, and Skule,* the sons of Thorfin Hausakliufer.†

Earl Hakon now brought all the country under him, and remained all winter [970] in Throndhjem. Einar Skalaglam speaks of his conquests in Vellekla:—

> "Norway's great watchman, Harald, now
> May bind the silk snood on his brow—
> Seven provinces he seized. The realm
> Prospers with Hakon at the helm."

As Hakon the earl proceeded this summer along the coast subjecting all the people to him, he ordered that over all his dominions the temples and sacrifices

* The ancient family of Scollay in Orkney may probably derive their name from this chief.—L.

† In regard to Thorfin Hausakljufer's (Skull-cleaver) sons see the Saga of Saint Olaf, chapter 99.

should be restored, and continued as of old. So it is said in the Vellekla :—

"Hakon the earl, so good and wise,
Let all the ancient temples rise ;—
Thor's temples raised with fostering hand,
That had been ruined through the land.
His valiant champions, who were slain
On battle-fields across the main,
To Thor, the thunder-god, may tell
How for the gods all turns out well.
The hardy warrior now once more
Offers the sacrifice of gore ;
The shield-bearer in Loke's game *
Invokes once more great Odin's name,
The green earth gladly yields her store,
As she was wont in days of yore,
Since the brave breaker of the spears
The holy shrines again uprears.
The earl has conquered with strong hand
All that lies north of Viken land :
In battle storm, and iron rain,
Hakon spreads wide his sword's domain."

The first winter that Hakon ruled over Norway the herrings set in everywhere through the fiords to the land, and the seasons ripened to a good crop all that had been sown. The people, therefore, laid in seed for the next year, and got their lands sowed, and had hope of good times.

CHAPTER XVII.—*Earl Hakon's Battle with Ragnfred.*

King Ragnfred and King Gudrod, both sons of Gunhild and Eirik, were now the only sons of Gunhild remaining in life. So says Glum Geirason in Grayskin's lay :—

"When in the battle's bloody strife
The sword took noble Harald's life,

* Loke's game is war.– L.

Half of my fortunes with him fell:
But his two brothers, I know well,
My loss would soon repair, should they
Again in Norway bear the sway,
And to their promises should stand,
If they return to rule the land."

Ragnfred began his course in the spring after he had been a year in the Orkney Islands. He sailed from thence to Norway, and had with him fine troops and large ships. When he came to Norway he learnt that Earl Hakon was in Throndhjem; therefore he steered northwards around Stad, and plundered in South More. Some people submitted to him; for it often happens, when parties of armed men scour over a country, that those who are nearest the danger seek help where they think it may be expected. As soon as Earl Hakon heard the news of disturbance in More, he fitted out ships, sent the war-token through the land, made ready in all haste, and proceeded out of the fiord. He had no difficulty in assembling men. Ragnfred and Earl Hakon met at the north corner of More; and Hakon, who had most men, but fewer ships, began the battle. The combat was severe, but heaviest on Hakon's side; and, as the custom then was, they fought bow to bow, and there was a current in the sound which drove all the ships in upon the land. The earl ordered to row with the oars to the land where landing seemed easiest. When the ships were all grounded, the earl with all his men left them, and drew them up so far that the enemy might not launch them down again, and then drew up his men on a grass field, and challenged Ragnfred

to land. Ragnfred and his men laid their vessels in along the land, and they shot at each other a long time; but upon the land Ragnfred would not venture: and so they separated. Ragnfred sailed with his fleet southwards around Stad; for he was much afraid the whole forces of the country would swarm around Hakon. Hakon, on his part, was not inclined to try again a battle, for he thought the difference between their ships in size was too great; so in harvest he went north to Throndhjem, and stayed there all winter [971]. King Ragnfred consequently had all the country south of Stad at his mercy; namely, Fiord district, Hordaland, Sogn, Rogaland; and he had many people about him all winter. When spring approached he ordered out the people and collected a large force. By going about the districts he got many men, ships, and warlike stores sent as he required.

CHAPTER XVIII.—*Another Battle between Earl Hakon and Ragnfred in Sogn.*

Towards spring Earl Hakon ordered out all the men north in the country, and got many people from Halogaland and Naumudal; so that from Byrda* to Stad he had men from all the sea-coast. People flocked to him from all the Throndhjem district and from Raumsdal. It was said for certain that he had men from four great districts, and that seven

* Byrda, now Boro, in the parish of Biorn Isles, on the coast, near the mouth of the Namsen river, or Naumudal.—L.

earls followed him, and a matchless number of men. So it is said in the Vellekla:—

"Hakon, defender of the land,
Armed in the North his warrior-band;
To Sogn's old shore* his force he led,
And from all quarters thither sped
War-ships and men; and haste was made
By the young god of the sword-blade,
The hero-viking of the wave,
His wide domain from foes to save.
With shining keels seven kings sailed on
To meet this raven-feeding one.
When the clash came, the stunning sound
Was heard in Norway's farthest bound;
And sea-borne corpses, floating far,
Brought round the Naze news from the war."

Earl Hakon sailed then with his fleet southwards around Stad; and when he heard that King Ragnfred with his army had gone towards Sogn, he turned there also with his men to meet him: and there Ragnfred and Hakon met. Hakon came to the land with his ships, marked out a battle-field with hazel branches for King Ragnfred,† and took ground for his own men in it. So it is told in the Vellekla:—

"In the fierce battle Ragnfred then
Met the grim foe of Vindland men;‡
And many a hero of great name
Fell in the sharp sword's bloody game.
The wielder of fell Narve's weapon,§
The conquering hero, valiant Hakon,
Had laid his war-ships on the strand,
And ranged his warriors on the land."

* Sogn fiord.—L.

† This marking out a champ clos for battle appears to have been common among the Northmen.—L.

‡ Earl Hakon, from his victories over them, is called the foe of the Vindland men.—L.

§ Narve was the son of Loke; and the sword was called Narve's weapon.—L.

There was a great battle; but Earl Hakon, having by far the most people, gained the victory. It took place on the Thing-nes,* where Sogn and Hordaland meet.†

King Ragnfred fled to his ships, after 300‡ of his men had fallen. So it is said in the Vellekla:—

"Sharp was the battle-strife, I ween,—
Deadly and close it must have been,
Before, upon the bloody plain,
Three hundred corpses of the slain
Were stretched for the black raven's prey;
And when the conquerors took their way
To the sea-shore, they had to tread
O'er piled-up heaps of foemen dead."

After this battle King Ragnfred fled from Norway; but Earl Hakon restored peace to the country, and allowed the great army which had followed him in summer to return home to the north country, and he himself remained in the south that harvest and winter [972].

CHAPTER XIX.—*Earl Hakon's Marriage.*

Earl Hakon married a girl called Thora, a daughter of the powerful Skage Skoptason, and very beautiful she was. They had two sons, Svein and Heming, and a daughter called Bergliot who was afterwards married to Einar Tambaskielver. Earl Hakon was much addicted to women, and had many children; among others a daughter Ragnhild, whom he

* Now called Dingenæs (in Snorre Thinganes).

† Things were generally held on nesses or tongues accessible by water, as roads were not formed.—L.

‡ That is, 320.

married to Skopte Skagason, a brother of Thora. The earl loved Thora so much that he held Thora's family in higher respect than any other people, and Skopte his brother-in-law in particular; and he gave him many great fiefs in More. Whenever they were on a cruise together, Skopte must lay his ship nearest to the earl's, and no other ship was allowed to come in between.

CHAPTER XX.—*Skopte the Newsman's Death.*

One summer that Earl Hakon was on a cruise, there was a ship with him of which Thorleif the Wise was steersman. In it was also Eirik, Earl Hakon's son, then about ten or eleven years old. Now in the evenings, as they came into harbour, Eirik would not allow any ship but his to lie nearest to the earl's. But when they came to the south, to More, they met Skopte the earl's brother-in-law, with a well-manned ship; and as they rowed towards the fleet, Skopte called out that Thorleif should move out of the harbour to make room for him, and should go to the roadstead. Eirik in haste took up the matter, and ordered Skopte to go himself to the roadstead. When Earl Hakon heard that his son thought himself too great to give place to Skopte, he called to them immediately that they should haul out from their berth, threatening them with chastisement if they did not. When Thorleif heard this, he ordered his men to slip their land-cable, and they did so; and Skopte laid his vessel next to the earl's

as he used to do. When they came together, Skopte brought the earl all the news he had gathered, and the earl communicated to Skopte all the news he had heard; and Skopte was therefore called the Newsman. The winter after [973] Eirik was with his foster-father Thorleif, and early in spring he gathered a crew of followers, and Thorleif gave him a boat of fifteen benches of rowers, with ship furniture, tents, and ship provisions; and Eirik set out from the fiord, and southwards to More. Newsman Skopte happened also to be going with a fully manned boat of fifteen rowers' benches from one of his farms to another, and Eirik went against him to have a battle. Skopte was slain, but Eirik granted life to those of his men who were still on their legs. So says Eyjolf Dadaskald in the Banda lay:—

"At eve the youth went out
To meet the warrior stout—
To meet stout Skopte—he
Whose war-ship roves the sea.
Like force was on each side,
But in the whirling tide
The young wolf Eirik slew
Skopte, and all his crew:
And he was a gallant one,
Dear to the Earl Hakon.
Up, youth of steel-hard breast—
No time hast thou to rest!
Thy ocean wings spread wide—
Speed o'er the foaming tide!
Speed on—speed on thy way!
For here thou canst not stay."

Eirik sailed along the land and came to Denmark, and went to King Harald Gormson, and stayed with him all winter. In spring [974] the Danish king sent

him north to Norway, and gave him an earldom, and the government of Vingulmark and Raumarike, on the same terms as the small scat-paying kings had formerly held these domains. So says Eyjolf Dadaskald :—

"South through ocean's spray
His dragon flew away
To Gormson's hall renowned,
Where the bowl goes bravely round.
And the Danish king did place
This youth of noble race
Where, shield and sword in hand,
He would aye defend his land."

Eirik became afterwards a great chief.

CHAPTER XXI.—*Olaf Trygveson's Journey from Russia.*

All this time Olaf Trygveson was in Russia, and highly esteemed by King Valdemar, and beloved by the queen. King Valdemar made him chief over the men-at-arms whom he sent out to defend the land. So says Hallarstein : —

"The hater of the niggard hand,*
The chief who loves the Northman's land,
Was only twelve years old when he
His Russian war-ships put to sea.
The wain that ploughs the sea was then
Loaded with war-gear by his men—
With swords, and spears, and helms ; and deep
Out to the sea his good ships sweep."

Olaf had several battles, and was lucky as a leader of troops. He himself kept a great many men-at-

* The original figure of expression is, "hater of the fire of the bow's seat;" viz. the seat of the bow is the hand; the fire of the hand the gold-rings worn on the fingers; the hater of this fire he who does not care for it, but parts with it readily—the generous man.—L.

arms at his own expense out of the pay the king gave him. Olaf was very generous to his men, and therefore very popular. But then it came to pass, what so often happens when a foreigner is raised to higher power and dignity than men of the country, that many envied him because he was so favoured by the king, and also not less so by the queen. They hinted to the king that he should take care not to make Olaf too powerful,—"for such a man may be dangerous to you, if he were to allow himself to be used for the purpose of doing you or your kingdom harm; for he is extremely expert in all exercises and feats, and very popular. We do not, indeed, know what it is he can have to talk of so often with the queen." It was then the custom among great monarchs that the queen should have half of the court attendants, and she supported them at her own expense out of the scat and revenue provided for her for that purpose. It was so also at the court of King Valdemar that the queen had an attendance as large as the king, and they vied with each other about the finest men, each wanting to have such in their own service. It so fell out that the king listened to such speeches, and became somewhat silent and blunt towards Olaf. When Olaf observed this, he told it to the queen; and also that he had a great desire to travel to the Northern land, where his family formerly had power and kingdoms, and where it was most likely he would advance himself. The queen wished him a prosperous journey, and said he would be found a brave man wherever he might be. Olaf

then made ready, went on board, and set out to sea in the Baltic.

As he was coming from the east he made the island of Bornholm,* where he landed and plundered. The country people hastened down to the strand, and gave him battle; but Olaf gained the victory, and a large booty.

CHAPTER XXII.—*Olaf Trygveson's Marriage.*

While Olaf lay at Bornholm there came on bad weather, storm, and a heavy sea, so that his ships could not lie there; and he sailed southwards under Vindland,† where they found a good harbour. They conducted themselves very peacefully, and remained some time. In Vindland there was then a king called Burisleif,‡ who had three daughters,—Geira, Gunhild, and Astrid. The king's daughter Geira had the power and government in that part where Olaf and his people landed, and Dixin was the name of the man who most usually advised Queen Geira. Now when they heard that unknown people were come to the country, who were of distinguished appearance, and conducted themselves peaceably, Dixin repaired to them with a message from Queen Geira, inviting the strangers to take up their winter abode with her; for the summer was almost spent,

* Called in the original Borgundarholm.

† Vindland or Vendland—the land of the Vends, the Sclavonic people who then occupied the coast from the Vistula to Holstein. The Vendland of the saga is the present Mecklenburg, Pomerania, and East Prussia.—L.

‡ History knows no king among the Vends, but among their princes was one named Burisleif.

and the weather was severe and stormy. Now when Dixin came to the place he soon saw that the leader was a distinguished man, both from family and personal appearance, and he told Olaf the queen's invitation with the most kindly message. Olaf willingly accepted the invitation, and went in harvest [982] to Queen Geira. They liked each other exceedingly, and Olaf courted Queen Geira; and it was so settled that Olaf married her the same winter, and was ruler, along with Queen Geira, over her dominions. Halfred Vandredaskald tells of these matters in the lay he composed about King Olaf:—

"Why should the deeds the hero did
In Bornholm and the East be hid?
His deadly weapon Olaf bold
Dyed red: why should not this be told?"*

CHAPTER XXIII.—*Earl Hakon pays no Scat.*

Earl Hakon ruled over Norway, and paid no scat; because the Danish king gave him all the scat revenue that belonged to the king in Norway, for the expense and trouble he had in defending the country against Gunhild's sons.

CHAPTER XXIV.—*King Harald's levy to oppose the Emperor Otto's demand to introduce Christianity in his Kingdom.*

The Emperor Otto† was at that time in the Saxon country, and sent a message to King Harald, the

* These verses evidently belong to the end of chapter 21.

† Otto II., 973-983.

Danish king, that he must take on the true faith and be baptized, he and all his people whom he ruled; "otherwise," says the emperor, "we will march against him with an army." The Danish king ordered the land defence to be fitted out, Danavirke * (the Danish wall) to be well fortified, and his ships of war rigged out. He sent a message also to Earl Hakon in Norway to come to him early in spring [975], and with as many men as he could possibly raise. In spring Earl Hakon levied an army over the whole country which was very numerous, and with it he sailed to meet the Danish king. The king received him in the most honourable manner. Many other chiefs also joined the Danish king with their men, so that he had gathered a very large army.

CHAPTER XXV.—*Olaf Trygveson's War Expedition.*

Olaf Trygveson had been all winter [982] in Vindland,† as before related, and went the same winter to the baronies in Vindland which had formerly been under Queen Geira, but had withdrawn themselves from obedience and payment of taxes. There Olaf made war, killed many people, burnt out others, took much property, and laid all of them under subjection

* Danavirke. The Danish work was a wall of earth, stones, and wood, with a deep ditch in front, and a castle at every hundred fathoms, between the rivers Eider and Slien, constructed by Harald Blatand (Bluetooth) to oppose the progress of Charlemagne. Some traces of it still exist.—L.

† Snorre means to say that Olaf's first winter in Vindland preceded the emperor's expedition and conflict at Danavirke; but perfectly authentic German documents show that the emperor's expedition took place in the year 975, while Olaf was still in Russia. (See chapter 7.)

to him, and then went back to his castle. Early in spring Olaf rigged out his ships and set off to sea. He sailed to Scania* and made a landing. The people of the country assembled, and gave him battle: but King Olaf conquered, and made a great booty. He then sailed eastward to the island of Gotland, where he captured a merchant vessel belonging to the people of Jemtaland.† They made a brave defence; but the end of it was that Olaf cleared the deck, killed many of the men, and took all the goods. He had a third battle in Gotland, in which he also gained the victory, and made a great booty. So says Halfred Vandredaskald:—

"The king, so fierce in battle-fray,
First made the Vindland men give way:
The Gotlanders must tremble next;
And Scania's shores are sorely vexed
By the sharp pelting arrow shower
The hero and his warriors pour;
And then the Jemtaland men must fly,
Scared by his well-known battle-cry."

CHAPTER XXVI.—*The Emperor Otto and Earl Hakon have a Battle at the Danish Dyke in Slesvik.*

The Emperor Otto assembled a great army from Saxland‡, Frakland§, Frisland‖, and Vindland.¶

* The large part of Sweden, or of the country on the Swedish side of the Sound, called Scania, belonged in the earliest times to the kingdom of Denmark. Now called Skane.—L.

† Jemtaland is the province still so called on the Swedish side of a ridge of hills or keel of the peninsula, at the head of the Bothnian Gulf.—L.

‡ Saxonland, or Germany.—L.

§ Frakkland, or Frankland, is France.—L.

‖ Friesland, the low countries about the Ems.—L.

¶ Vindland is the present Pomerania and Mecklenburg down to the Gulf of Lubeck.—L.

King Burisleif followed him with a large army, and in it was his son-in-law, Olaf Trygveson. The emperor had a great body of horsemen, and still greater of foot people, and a great army from Holstein.* Harald, the Danish king, sent Earl Hakon with the army of Northmen that followed him southwards to Danavirke, to defend his kingdom on that side. So it is told in the "Vellekla:"—

"Over the foaming salt sea spray
The Norse sea-horses took their way,
Racing across the ocean-plain
Southwards to Denmark's green domain.
The gallant chief of Hordaland†
Sat at the helm with steady hand,
In casque and shield, his men to bring
From Dovre to his friend the king.
He steered his war-ships o'er the wave
To help the Danish king to save
Mordalf, who, with a gallant band,
Was hastening from the Jutes' wild land,
Across the forest frontier rude,
With toil and pain through the thick wood.
Glad was the Danish king, I trow,
When he saw Hakon's galley's prow.
The monarch straightway gave command
To Hakon, with a steel-clad band,
To man the Dane-work's rampart stout,
And keep the foreign foemen out."

The Emperor Otto came with his army from the south to Danavirke, but Earl Hakon defended the rampart with his men. The Dane-work (Danavirke) was constructed in this way:—Two fiords run into the land, one on each side; and in the farthest bight of these fiords the Danes had made a great wall of stone, turf, and timber, and dug a deep and

* Holstein is called by Snorre Holsetaland.
† Earl Hakon. Hordaland is often used for Norway by the skald.—L.

broad ditch in front of it, and had also built a castle over each gate of it. There was a hard battle there, of which the "Vellekla" speaks:—

"Thick the storm of arrows flew,
Loud was the din, black was the view
Of close array of shield and spear
Of Vind, and Frank, and Saxon there.
But little recked our gallant men;
And loud the cry might be heard then
Of Norway's brave sea-roving son—
'On 'gainst the foe! on! lead us on!'"

Earl Hakon drew up his people in ranks upon all the gate-towers of the wall, but the greater part of them he kept marching along the wall to make a defence wheresoever an attack was threatened. Many of the emperor's people fell without making any impression on the fortification, so the emperor turned back without farther attempt at an assault on it. So it is said in the "Vellekla":—

"They who the eagle's feast provide
In ranked line fought side by side,
'Gainst lines of war-men under shields
Close packed together on the fields.
Earl Hakon drives by daring deeds
These Saxons to their ocean-steeds;
And the young hero saves from fall
The Danavirke—the people's wall."

After this battle Earl Hakon went back to his ships, and intended to sail home to Norway; but he did not get a favourable wind, and lay for some time outside at Limfiord.

CHAPTER XXVII.—*King Harald and Earl Hakon are Baptized.*

The Emperor Otto turned back with his troops to Slesvik, collected his ships of war, and crossed the fiord of Sle * into Jutland. As soon as the Danish king heard of this he marched his army against him, and there was a battle, in which the emperor at last got the victory. The Danish king fled to Limfiord, and took refuge in the island Marsey.† By the help of mediators who went between the king and the emperor, a truce and a meeting between them were agreed on. The Emperor Otto and the Danish king met upon Mors Isle. There Bishop Poppo instructed King Harald in the holy faith; he bore red hot irons in his hands, and exhibited his unscorched hands to the king. Thereafter King Harald allowed himself to be baptized, and also the whole Danish army.‡ King Hakon, while he was in Mors Isle, had sent a message to Hakon that he should come to his succour; and the earl had just reached the island when the king had received baptism. The king sends word to the earl to come to him, and when they met the king forced the earl to allow himself also to be baptized. So Earl Hakon and all the men who were with him were baptized; and the king gave them priests and other learned men with them, and ordered that the earl should make all the

* The fiord now called Slien runs up to the town of Slesvik.—L.

† Marsey is now called Mors, an island in the Limfiord.—L.

‡ German authorities, Widukind, Thictmar, and others, make King Harald's baptism and Bishop Poppo's miracle happen at an earlier time.

people in Norway be baptized. On that they separated; and the earl went out to sea, there to wait for a wind.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—*Earl Hakon renounces the Christian Faith, and plunders in Gautland.*

When a wind came with which he thought he could get clear out to sea, he put all the learned men on shore again, and set off to the ocean; but as the wind came round to the south-west, and at last to west, he sailed eastward, out through the sound,* ravaging the land on both sides. He then sailed eastward along Scania, plundering the country wherever he came. When he got east to the skerries of East Gautland, he ran in and landed, and made a great blood-sacrifice. There came two ravens flying which croaked loudly; and now, thought the earl, the blood-offering has been accepted by Odin, and he thought good luck would be with him any day he liked to go to battle. Then he set fire to his ships, landed his men, and went over all the country with armed hand. Earl Ottar, who ruled over Gautland, came against him, and they held a great battle with each other; but Earl Hakon gained the day, and Earl Ottar and a great part of his men were killed.† Earl Hakon now drove with fire and sword over both the Gautlands, until he

* Eyrarsund is the sound betwixt Seeland and Sweden, which is still called Ore Sound by the Scandinavians.—L.

† The *Fagrskinna*, chapter 48, says that Ottar took flight, but that many of his men fell.

came into Norway; and then he proceeded by land all the way north to Throndhjem. The "Vellekla" tells about this:—

"On the silent battle-field,
In viking garb, with axe and shield,
The warrior, striding o'er the slain,
Asks of the gods 'What days will gain?"
Two ravens, flying from the east,
Come croaking to the bloody feast:
The warrior knows what they foreshow—
The days when Gautland blood will flow.
A viking-feast Earl Hakon kept,
The land with viking fury swept,
Harrying the land far from the shore
Where foray ne'er was known before.
Leaving the barren cold coast side,
He raged through Gautland far and wide,—
Led many a gold-decked viking shield
O'er many a peaceful inland field.
Bodies on bodies Odin found
Heaped high upon each battle ground:
The moor, as if by witchcraft's power,
Grows green, enriched by bloody shower.
No wonder that the gods delight
To give such luck in every fight
To Hakon's men—for he restores
Their temples on our Norway shores."

CHAPTER XXIX.—*The Emperor Otto returns home.*

The Emperor Otto went back to his kingdom in the Saxon land, and parted in friendship with the Danish king. It is said that the Emperor Otto stood godfather to Svein, King Harald's son, and gave him his name; so that he was baptized Otto Svein.* King Harald held fast by his Christianity to his dying day.

* This was Swend or Svein, afterwards the conqueror of England, and father of Canute the Great. This statement is also found in *Knytlinga Saga*, chapter 1.

King Burisleif went to Vindland, and his son-in-law King Olaf went with him. This battle is related also by Halfred Vandredaskald in his song on Olaf: *—

"He who through the foaming surges
His white-winged ocean-coursers urges,
Hewed from the Danes, in armour dressed,
The iron bark off mail-clad breast."

CHAPTER XXX.—*Olaf's Journey from Vindland.*

Olaf Trygveson was three years in Vindland [982-984] when Geira his queen fell sick, and she died of her illness. Olaf felt his loss so great that he had no pleasure in Vindland after it. He provided himself, therefore, with war-ships, and went out again a plundering, and plundered first in Frisland, next in Saxland, and then all the way to Flanders.† So says Halfred Vandredaskald:—

"Olaf's broad axe of shining steel
For the shy wolf left many a meal.
The ill-shaped Saxon corpses lay
Heaped up, the witch-wife's horses' ‡ prey.
She rides by night: at pools of blood,
Where Frisland men in daylight stood,
Her horses slake their thirst, and fly
On to the field where Flemings lie.
The raven-friend in Odin's dress §—
Olaf, who foes can well repress,
Left Flemish flesh for many a meal
With his broad axe of shining steel."

* This poem must refer to another battle, as Olaf was at this time in Russia.

† The present Belgium. ‡ Ravens were the witches' horses.—L.

§ Odin's dress is full armour.—L.

CHAPTER XXXI.—*King Olaf Trygveson's Forays.*

Thereafter Olaf Trygveson sailed to England, and ravaged wide around in the land. He sailed all the way north to Northumberland, where he plundered; and thence to Scotland, where he marauded far and wide. Then he went to the Hebrides, where he fought some battles; and then southwards to Man, where he also fought. He ravaged far around in Ireland, and thence steered to Bretland,* which he laid waste with fire and sword, and also the district called Cumberland.† He sailed westward from thence to Valland,‡ and marauded there. When he left the west, intending to sail to England, he came to the islands called the Scilly Isles, lying westward from England in the ocean. Thus tells Halfred Vandredaskald of these events: —

"The brave young king, who ne'er retreats,
The Englishman in England beats.
Death through Northumberland is spread
From battleaxe and broad spear-head.
Through Scotland with his spears he rides;
To Man his glancing ships he guides:
Feeding the wolves where'er he came,
The young king drove a bloody game.
The gallant bowmen in the isles
Slew foemen, who lay heaped in piles.
The Irish fled at Olaf's name—
Fled from a young king seeking fame.
In Bretland, and in Cumberland,
People against him could not stand:

* Bretland, the land of the Britons, or Wales.—L.

† Kumraland, or Cumberland; but one of the MSS. of Snorre's work appears to have Kauraland, which would rather indicate Cornwall, and would correspond better with Olaf's voyage from Wales to Valland.—L.

‡ Valland is the west coast of France, from the Seine to the Loire.—L.

Thick on the fields their corpses lay,
To ravens and howling wolves a prey."

Olaf Trygveson had been four years on this cruise [985-988], from the time he left Vindland till he came to the Scilly Islands.

CHAPTER XXXII.—*King Olaf is Baptized in the Scilly Islands.*

While Olaf Trygveson lay in the Scilly Isles he heard of a seer, or fortune-teller, on the islands, who could tell beforehand things not yet done, and what he foretold many believed was really fulfilled. Olaf became curious to try this man's gift of prophecy. He therefore sent one of his men, who was the handsomest and strongest, clothed him magnificently, and bade him say he was the king; for Olaf was known in all countries as handsomer, stronger, and braver than all others, although, after he had left Russia, he retained no more of his name than that he was called Ole, and was Russian. Now when the messenger came to the fortune-teller, and gave himself out for the king, he got the answer, "Thou art not the king, but I advise thee to be faithful to thy king," And more he would not say to that man. The man returned, and told Olaf, and his desire to meet the fortune-teller was increased; and now he had no doubt of his being really a fortune-teller. Olaf repaired himself to him, and, entering into conversation, asked him if he could foresee how it would go with him with regard to his

kingdom, or of any other fortune he was to have. The hermit replies in a holy spirit of prophecy, "Thou wilt become a renowned king, and do celebrated deeds. Many men wilt thou bring to faith and baptism, and both to thy own and others' good; and that thou mayest have no doubt of the truth of this answer, listen to these tokens: When thou comest to thy ships many of thy people will conspire against thee, and then a battle will follow in which many of thy men will fall, and thou wilt be wounded almost to death, and carried upon a shield to thy ship; yet after seven days thou shalt be well of thy wounds, and immediately thou shalt let thyself be baptized." Soon after Olaf went down to his ships, where he met some mutineers and people who would destroy him and his men. A fight took place, and the result was what the hermit had predicted, that Olaf was wounded, and carried upon a shield * to his ship, and that his wound was healed in seven days. Then Olaf perceived that the man had spoken truth,—that he was a true fortune-teller, and had the gift of prophecy. Olaf went once more to the hermit, and asked particularly how he came to have such wisdom in foreseeing things to be. The hermit replied, that the Christian's God himself let him know all that he desired; and he brought before Olaf many great proofs of the power of the Almighty. In consequence of this encouragement

* The shield of the Northmen appears to have been not the round, but the narrow oblong shield. We read of the men sleeping under their shields, and of being carried upon the shield when wounded. It must have been long-shaped.—L.

Olaf agreed to let himself be baptized, and he and all his followers were baptized forthwith. He remained here a long time, took the true faith, and got with him priests and other learned men.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—*Olaf marries Gyda.*

In autumn [988] Olaf sailed from Scilly to England, where he put into a harbour, but proceeded in a friendly way; for England was Christian, and he himself had become Christian.* At this time a summons to a Thing went through the country, that all men should come to hold a Thing. Now when the Thing was assembled a queen called Gyda came to it, a sister of Olaf Kvaran, who was king of Dublin in Ireland. She had been married to a great earl in England, and after his death she was at the head of his dominions. In her territory there was a man called Alfvine, who was a great champion and single-combat man. He had paid his addresses to her; but she gave for answer, that she herself would choose whom of the men in her dominions she would take in marriage; and on that account the Thing was assembled, that she might choose a husband. Alfvine came there dressed out in his best clothes, and there were many well-dressed men at the meeting. Olaf had come there also; but had on his bad-weather clothes, and a coarse over-garment, and stood with

* In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, under the year 993, we read of Olaf's (Anlaf, Unlef) coming to England with 93 ships and making depredations at Stone, Sandwich, Ipswich, and Maldon. At the last named place he conquered a large English army. See the *Chronicle*.

his people apart from the rest of the crowd. Gyda went round and looked at each, to see if any appeared to her a suitable man. Now when she came to where Olaf stood she looked at him straight in the face, and asked "what sort of man he was?"

He said, "I am called Ole; and I am a stranger here."

Gyda replies, "Wilt thou have me if I choose thee?"

"I will not say no to that," answered he; and he asked what her name was, and her family, and descent.

"I am called Gyda," said she; "and am daughter of the king of Ireland, and was married in this country to an earl who ruled over this territory. Since his death I have ruled over it, and many have courted me, but none to whom I would choose to be married."

She was a young and handsome woman. They afterwards talked over the matter together, and agreed, and Olaf and Gyda were betrothed.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—*King Olaf and Alfvine's Duel.*

Alfvine was very ill pleased with this. It was the custom then in England, if two strove for anything, to settle the matter by single combat;* and now Alfvine challenges Olaf Trygveson to fight about this business. The time and place for the combat were

* Holm-gang; so called because the combatants went to a holm or uninhabited isle to fight in Norway.—L.

settled, and that each should have twelve men with him. When they met, Olaf told his men to do exactly as they saw him do. He had a large axe; and when Alfvine was going to cut at him with his sword he hewed away the sword out of his hand, and with the next blow struck down Alfvine himself. He then bound him fast. It went in the same way with all Alfvine's men. They were beaten down, bound, and carried to Olaf's lodging. Thereupon he ordered Alfvine to quit the country, and never appear in it again; and Olaf took all his property. Olaf in this way got Gyda in marriage, and lived sometimes in England, and sometimes in Ireland.*

CHAPTER XXXV.—*King Olaf gets his Dog Vige.*

While Olaf was in Ireland he was once on an expedition which went by sea. As they required to make a foray for provisions on the coast, some of his men landed, and drove down a large herd of cattle to the strand. Now a peasant came up, and entreated Olaf to give him back the cows that belonged to him. Olaf told him to take his cows, if he could distinguish them; "but don't delay our march." The peasant had with him a large house-dog, which he put in among the herd of cattle, in which many hundred head of beasts were driven together. The dog ran into the herd, and drove out exactly the number which the peasant had said he wanted; and all were

* Gyda bore to Olaf a son who was called Trygve, and who is mentioned in the Saga of Saint Olaf, chapters 262, 263.

marked with the same mark, which showed that the dog knew the right beasts, and was very sagacious. Olaf then asked the peasant if he would sell him the dog. "I would rather give him to you," said the peasant. Olaf immediately presented him with a gold ring in return, and promised him his friendship in future. This dog was called Vige, and was the very best of dogs, and Olaf owned him long afterwards.*

CHAPTER XXXVI.—*Of King Harald Gormson, and his Expedition against Iceland.*

The Danish king, Harald Gormson, heard that Earl Hakon had thrown off Christianity, and had plundered far and wide in the Danish land. The Danish king levied an army, with which he went to Norway; and when he came to the country which Earl Hakon had to rule over he laid waste the whole land, and came with his fleet to some islands called Solunder.† Only five houses were left standing in Lerdal; but all the people fled up to the mountains, and into the forest, taking with them all the moveable goods they could carry with them. Then the Danish king proposed to sail with his fleet to Iceland, to avenge the mockery and scorn all the Ice-

* More about this dog Vige will be found in chapter 85. In the so-called *Greater Olafs Saga* it is related that, when the Long Serpent (Olaf Trygveson's ship) returned to Viken from the battle at Svold, Einar Tambaskjelver, before going ashore, went to Vige, that had been on board all the time, and exclaimed: "Now we have no master, Vige," whereupon the dog began to howl. It rushed ashore, laid itself on a mound, and mourned so deeply that tears came in its eyes. It could not be induced to take food, and soon died.

† Now called Sulen Isles, near the mouth of the Sogn fjord.

landers had shown towards him; for they had made a law in Iceland, that they should make as many lampoons against the Danish king as there were headlands in his country; and the reason was, because a vessel which belonged to certain Icelanders was stranded in Denmark, and the Danes took all the property, and called it wreck. One of the king's bailiffs called Birger was to blame for this; but the lampoons were made against both. In the lampoons were the following lines:—

"The gallant Harald in the field
Between his legs lets drop his shield;
Into a pony he was changed,
And kicked his shield, and safely ranged.
And Birger, he who dwells in halls
For safety built with four stone walls,
That these might be a worthy pair,
Was changed into a pony mare."

CHAPTER XXXVII.—*King Harald sends a Warlock in a transformed shape to Iceland.*

King Harald told a warlock to hie to Iceland in some altered shape, and to try what he could learn there to tell him: and he set out in the shape of a whale.* And when he came near to the land he went to the west side of Iceland, north around the land, where he saw all the mountains and hills full of guardian-spirits, some great, some small. When he came to Vapnafiord he went in towards the land, intending to go on shore; but a huge dragon rushed

* It is probable that all this chapter is intended for satire on people in the different localities of Iceland mentioned; but we have not the clue to the wit.—L.

down the dale against him with a train of serpents, paddocks, and toads, that blew poison towards him. Then he turned to go westward around the land as far as Eyjafiord, and he went into the fiord. Then a bird flew against him, which was so great that its wings stretched over the mountains on either side of the fiord, and many birds, great and small, with it. Then he swam farther west, and then south into Breidafiord. When he came into the fiord a large grey bull ran against him, wading into the sea, and bellowing fearfully, and he was followed by a crowd of land-spirits. From thence he went round by Reykjanes, and wanted to land at Vikarsskeid, but there came down a hill-giant against him with an iron staff in his hands. He was a head higher than the mountains, and many other giants followed him. He then swam eastward along the land, and there was nothing to see, he said, but sand and vast deserts, and, without the skerries, high-breaking surf; and the ocean between the countries was so wide that a long-ship could not cross it. At that time Brod-Helge * dwelt in Vapnafiord, Eyjolf Valgerdson in Eyjafiord, Thord Geller † in Breidafiord, and Thorod Gode in Olfus. Then the Danish king turned about with his fleet, and sailed back to Denmark.

Hakon the earl settled habitations again in the country that had been laid waste, and paid no scat as long as he lived to Denmark.

* Of Brod-Helge there is a separate saga called *Vapnfirdinga Saga*, the story of the people of Weapon firth.

† Thord Geller is mentioned in several of the sagas.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—*Harald Gormson's Death.*

Svein, King Harald's son, who afterwards was called Tjuguskeg* (forked beard), asked his father King Harald for a part of his kingdom; but now, as before, Harald would not listen to dividing the Danish dominions, and giving him a kingdom. Svein collected ships of war, and gave out that he was going on a viking cruise; but when all his men were assembled, and the Jomsborg viking Palnatoke† had come to his assistance he ran into Seeland to Isefiord, where his father had been for some time with his ships ready to proceed on an expedition. Svein instantly gave battle, and the combat was severe. So many people flew to assist King Harald, that Svein was overpowered by numbers, and fled. But King Harald received a wound which ended in his death: and Svein was chosen King of Denmark. At this time Sigvald was earl over Jomsborg in Vindland. He was a son of King Strut-Harald, who had ruled over Scania. Heming, and Thorkel‡ the Tall, were Sigvald's brothers. Bue the Thick from Bornholm, and Sigurd his brother, were also chiefs among the Jomsburg vikings: and also Vagn, a son of Ake and Thorgunna, and a sister's son of Bue and Sigurd. Earl Sigvald had taken King Svein prisoner, and carried him to Vindland, to Jomsborg, where he had forced him to make peace

* King in Denmark from 985 to 1014.

† Palnatoke, the reputed founder and chief of the Jomsborg vikings. He is a legendary rather than an historical person.

‡ In some versions of the saga he is called earl in Scania.

with Burisleif, the king of the Vinds, and to take him as the peace-maker between them. Earl Sigvald was married to Astrid, a daughter of King Burisleif; and told King Svein that if he did not accept of his terms, he would deliver him into the hands of the Vinds. The king knew that they would torture him to death, and therefore agreed to accept the earl's mediation. The earl delivered this judgment between them—that King Svein should marry Gunhild, King Burisleif's daughter; and King Burisleif again Thyre, a daughter of Harald, and King Svein's sister; but that each party should retain their own dominions, and there should be peace between the countries. Then King Svein returned home to Denmark with his wife Gunhild. Their sons were Harald* and Knut (Canute) the Great. At that time the Danes threatened much to bring an army into Norway against Earl Hakon.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—*The Solemn Vow of the Jomsborg Vikings.*

King Svein made a magnificent feast, to which he invited all the chiefs in his dominions; for he would give the succession-feast, or the heirship-ale, after his father Harald. A short time before, Strut-Harald in Scania, and Vesete in Bornholm, father to Bue the Thick and to Sigurd, had died; and King Svein sent word to the Jomsborg vikings that Earl Sigvald, and Bue and their brothers, should come to him,

* Harald died in 1018.

and drink the funeral-ale for their fathers in the same feast the king was giving. The Jomsborg vikings came to the festival with their bravest men, forty ships of them from Vindland, and twenty ships from Scania. Great was the multitude of people assembled. The first day of the feast, before King Svein went up into his father's high-seat, he drank the bowl to his father's memory, and made the solemn vow, that before three winters were past he would go over with his army to England, and either kill King Adalrad (Ethelred),* or chase him out of the country. This heirship bowl all who were at the feast drank. Thereafter for the chiefs of the Jomsborg vikings was filled and drunk the largest horn to be found, and of the strongest drink. When that bowl was emptied, all men drank Christ's health; and again the fullest measure and the strongest drink were handed to the Jomsborg vikings. The third bowl was to the memory of Saint Michael, which was drunk by all. Thereafter Earl Sigvald emptied a remembrance bowl to his father's honour, and made the solemn vow, that before three winters came to an end he would go to Norway, and either kill Earl Hakon, or chase him out of the country. Thereupon Thorkell the Tall, his brother, made a solemn vow to follow his brother Sigvald to Norway, and not flinch from the battle so long as Sigvald would fight there. Then Bue the Thick vowed to follow them to Norway, and not flinch so long as the other Jomsborg vikings fought. At last Vagn Akason vowed that he would

* Svein actually banished King Ethelred II. from his kingdom in 1013.

go with them to Norway, and not return until he had slain Thorkel Leira, and gone to bed to his daughter Ingibjorg without her friends' consent. Many other chiefs made solemn vows about different things. Thus was the heirship-ale drunk that day, but the next morning, when the Jomsborg vikings had slept off their drink, they thought they had spoken more than enough. They held a meeting to consult how they should proceed with their undertaking, and they determined to fit out as speedily as possible for the expedition; and without delay ships and men-at-arms were prepared, and the news spread quickly.

CHAPTER XL.—*Earl Eirik and Earl Hakon prepare a War Levy.*

When Earl Eirik, the son of Hakon, who at that time was in Raumarike, heard the tidings, he immediately gathered troops, and went to the Uplands, and thence over the mountains to Throndhjem, and joined his father Earl Hakon. Thord Kolbeinson * speaks of this in the lay of Eirik:—

"News from the south are flying round;
The bonde comes with look profound,
Bad news of bloody battles bringing,
Of steel-clad men, of weapons ringing.
I hear that in the Danish land
Long-sided ships slide down the strand,
And, floating with the rising tide,
The ocean-coursers soon will ride."

* Thord Kolbeinson was one of the chief skalds of Iceland. The winter 1008 he spent with Earl Eirik, and in 1016 he was with King Olaf the Saint. He was the author of many poems.

The earls Hakon and Eirik had war-arrows split up and sent round the Throndhjem country; and despatched messages to both the Mores, North More and South More, and to Raumsdal, and also north to Naumudal and Halogaland. They summoned all the country to provide both men and ships. So it is said in Eirik's lay:—

"The skald must now a war-song raise,—
The gallant active youth must praise,
Who o'er the ocean's field spreads forth
Ships, cutters, boats, from the far north.
His mighty fleet comes sailing by,—
From headlands many a mast we spy:
The people run to see them glide,
Mast after mast, by the coast-side."

Earl Hakon set out immediately to the south, to More, to reconnoitre and gather people; and Earl Eirik gathered an army from the north to follow.

CHAPTER XLI.—*The Expedition of the Jomsborg Vikings to Norway.*

The Jomsborg vikings assembled their fleet in Limfiord, from whence they went to sea with sixty sail of vessels. When they came under the coast of Agder, they steered northwards to Rogaland with their fleet, and began to plunder when they came into the earl's territory; and so they sailed north along the coast, plundering and burning. A man, by name Geirmund, sailed in a light boat with a few men northwards to More, and there he fell in with Earl Hakon, stood before his dinner table, and told the earl the tidings of an army from Denmark having

come to the south end of the land. The earl asked if he had any certainty of it. Then Geirmund stretched forth one arm, from which the hand was cut off, and said, "Here is the token that the enemy is in the land." Then the earl questioned him particularly about this army. Geirmund says it consists of Jomsborg vikings, who have killed many people, and plundered all around. "And hastily and hotly they pushed on," says he, "and I expect it will not be long before they are upon you." On this the earl rode into every fiord, going in along the one side of the land and out at the other, collecting men; and thus he drove along night and day. He sent spies out upon the upper ridges, and also southwards into the Fiords; and he proceeded north to meet Eirik with his men. This appears from Eirik's lay:—

"The earl, well skilled in war to speed
O'er the wild wave the viking-steed,
Now launched the high stems from the shore,
Which death to Sigvald's vikings bore.
Rollers beneath the ships' keels crash,
Oar-blades loud in the grey sea splash,
And they who give the ravens food
Row fearless through the curling flood."

Eirik hastened southwards with his forces the shortest way he could.

CHAPTER XLII.—*Of the Jomsborg Vikings and their Expedition.*

Earl Sigvald steered with his fleet northwards around Stad, and came to the land at the Herey

Isles. Although the vikings fell in with the country people, the people never told the truth about what the earl was doing; and the vikings went on pillaging and laying waste. They laid to their vessels at the outer end of Had Island, landed, plundered, and drove both men and cattle down to the ships, killing all the men able to bear arms.

As they were going back to their ships, came a bonde, walking near to Bue's troop, who said to them, "Ye are not doing like true warriors, to be driving cows and calves down to the strand, while ye should be giving chase to the bear, since ye are coming near to the bear's den."

"What says the old man?" asked some. "Can he tell us anything about Earl Hakon?"

The peasant replies, "The earl went yesterday into the Hjorundarfiord* with one or two ships, certainly not more than three, and then he had no news about you."

Bue ran now with his people in all haste down to the ships, leaving all the booty behind. Bue said, "Let us avail ourselves now of this news we have got of the earl, and be the first to the victory." When they came to their ships they rode off from the land. Earl Sigvald called to them, and asked what they were about. They replied, "The earl is in the fiord;" on which Earl Sigvald with the whole fleet set off, and rowed north about the island Had.

* Hjorundarfjord in South More is now called Hjorendfjord.

CHAPTER XLIII.—*Beginning of the Battle with the Jomsborg Vikings.*

The earls Hakon and Eirik lay in Halkelsvik, where all their forces were assembled. They had 150 ships, and they had heard that the Jomsborg vikings had come in from sea, and lay at the island Had; and they, in consequence, rowed out to seek them. When they reached a place called Hiorungavag they met each other, and both sides drew up their ships in line for an attack. Earl Sigvald's banner was displayed in the midst of his army, and right against it Earl Hakon arranged his force for attack. Earl Sigvald himself had 20 ships, but Earl Hakon had 60. In Earl Hakon's army were these chiefs,—Thorer Hiort * from Halogaland, and Styrkar from Gimsar. In the wing of the opposite array of the Jomsborg vikings was Bue the Thick, and his brother Sigurd, with 20 ships. Against him Earl Eirik laid himself with 60 ships; and with him were these chiefs,—Gudbrand Hvite from the Uplands, and Thorkel Leira from Viken. In the other wing of the Jomsborg vikings' array was Vagn Akason with 20 ships; and against him stood Svein the son of Hakon, in whose division was Skegge of Yrjar at Uphaug, and Ragnvald of Arvig at Stad, with 60 ships. It is told in the Eirik's lay thus:—

"The bonde's ships along the coast
Sailed on to meet the foemen's host;

* In regard to Thorer Hjort, see chapter 65 and chapter 85.

The stout earl's ships, with eagle flight,
Rushed on the Danes in bloody fight.
The Danish ships, of court-men full,
Were cleared of men,—and many a hull
Was driving empty on the main,
With the warm corpses of the slain."

Eyvind Skaldaspiller says also in the "Haleygia-tal":

"'Twas at the peep of day,—
Our brave earl led the way;
His ocean horses bounding—
His war-horns loudly sounding!
No joyful morn arose
For Yngve Frey's base foes:*
These Christian island-men
Wished themselves home again."

Then the fleets came together, and one of the sharpest of conflicts began. Many fell on both sides, but the most by far on Hakon's side; for the Jomsborg vikings fought desperately, sharply, and murderously, and shot right through the shields. So many spears were thrown against Earl Hakon that his armour was altogether split asunder, and he threw it off. So says Tind Halkelson†:—

"The ring-linked coat of strongest mail
Could not withstand the iron hail,
Though sewed with care and elbow bent,
By Norn,‡ on its strength intent.
The fire of battle raged around,—
Odin's steel shirt flew all unbound!

* The Danes, being Christians, were particularly obnoxious to the heathen Norsemen and the skald.—L.

† Eleven songs by Tind Halkelson are preserved in a manuscript of the *Jomsvikinga Saga.*

‡ Norn, one of the Fates, stands here for women, whose business it was to sew the rings of iron upon the cloth which made these ring-mail coats or shirts. Some of these may be seen in the Museum of Northern Antiquities at Copenhagen. The needles, although some of them were of gold, appear to have been without eyes, and used like shoemakers' awls.—L.

The earl his ring-mail from him flung,
Its steel rings on the wet deck rung;
Part of it fell into the sea,—
A part was kept, a proof to be
How sharp and thick the arrow-flight
Among the sea-steeds in this fight."

CHAPTER XLIV.—*Earl Sigvald's Flight.*

The Jomsborg vikings had larger and higher-sided ships; and both parties fought desperately. Vagn Akason laid his ship on board of Svein Earl Hakon's son's ship, and Svein allowed his ship to give way, and was on the point of flying. Then Earl Eirik came up, and laid his ship alongside of Vagn, and then Vagn gave way, and the ships came to lie in the same position as before. Thereupon Eirik goes to the other wing, which had gone back a little, and Bue had cut the ropes, intending to pursue them. Then Eirik laid himself, board to board, alongside of Bue's ship, and there was a severe combat hand to hand. Two or three of Eirik's ships then laid themselves upon Bue's single vessel. A thunder-storm came on at this moment, and such a heavy hail-storm that every hailstone weighed a pennyweight.* The Earl Sigvald cut his cable, turned his ship round, and took flight. Vagn Akason called to him not to fly; but as Earl Sigvald paid no attention to what he said, Vagn threw his spear at him, and hit the man at the helm. Earl Sigvald rowed away with 35 ships, leaving 25 of his fleet behind.

* Eyri, a piece of money (öre), equal to an ounce weight.—L.

CHAPTER XLV.—*Bue Digre throws himself overboard.*

Then Earl Hakon laid his ship on the other side of Bue's ship, and now came heavy blows on Bue's men. Vigfus, a son of Vigaglum, took up an anvil with a sharp end, which lay upon the deck, and on which a man had welded the hilt to his sword just before, and being a very strong man cast the anvil with both hands at the head of Aslak Holmskalle, and the end of it went into his brains. Before this no weapon could wound this Aslak, who was Bue's foster-brother, and forecastle commander, although he could wound right and left. Another man among the strongest and bravest was Havard * Hogvande. In this attack Eirik's men boarded Bue's ship, and went aft to the quarter-deck where Bue stood. There Thorstein Midlang cut at Bue across his nose, so that the nose-piece of his helmet was cut in two, and he got a great wound; but Bue, in turn, cut at Thorstein's side, so that the sword cut the man through. Then Bue lifted up two chests full of gold, and called aloud, "Overboard all Bue's men," and threw himself overboard with his two chests. Many of his people sprang overboard with him. Some fell in the ship, for it was of no use to call for quarter. Bue's ship was cleared of people from stem to stern, and afterwards all the others, the one after the other.

* This name Havard or Haavard, common among the Northmen, appears to be the English name Howard, and left by them in Northumberland and East Anglia.—L.

CHAPTER XLVI.—*The Jomsborg Vikings bound together in one chain.*

Earl Eirik then laid himself alongside of Vagn's ship, and there was a brave defence; but at last this ship too was cleared, and Vagn and thirty men were taken prisoners, and bound, and brought to land. Then came up Thorkel Leira, and said, "Thou madest a solemn vow, Vagn, to kill me; but now it seems more likely that I will kill thee." Vagn and his men sat all upon a log of wood together. Thorkel had an axe in his hands, with which he cut at him who sat outmost on the log. Vagn and the other prisoners were bound so that a rope was fastened on their feet, but they had their hands free. One of them said, "I will stick this cloak-pin that I have in my hand into the earth, if it be so that I know anything, after my head is cut off." His head was cut off, but the cloak-pin fell from his hand. There sat also a very handsome man with long hair, who twisted his hair over his head, put out his neck, and said, "Don't make my hair bloody." A man took the hair in his hands and held it fast. Thorkel hewed with his axe; but the viking twitched his head so strongly that he who was holding his hair fell forwards, and the axe cut off both his hands, and stuck fast in the earth. Then Earl Eirik came up, and asked, "Who is that handsome man?"

He replies, "I am called Sigurd, and am Bue's son. But are all the Jomsborg vikings dead?"

Eirik says, "Thou art certainly Bue's son. Wilt thou now take life and peace?"

"That depends," says he, "upon who it is that offers it."

"He offers who has the power to do it—Earl Eirik."

"That will I," says he, "from his hands." And now the rope was loosened from him.

Then said Thorkel Leira, "Although thou should give all these men life and peace, earl, Vagn Akason shall never come from this with life." And he ran at him with uplifted axe; but the viking Skarde swung himself in the rope, and let himself fall just before Thorkel's feet, so that Thorkel fell over him, and Vagn caught the axe and gave Thorkel a death-wound. Then said the earl, "Vagn, wilt thou accept life?"

"That I will," says he, "if you give it to all of us."

"Loose them from the rope," said the earl; and it was done. Eighteen were killed, and twelve got their lives.

CHAPTER XLVII.—*Death of Gissur of Valders.*

Earl Hakon, and many with him, were sitting upon a piece of wood, and a bow-string twanged from Bue's ship, and the arrow struck Gissur from Valders, who was sitting next the earl, and was clothed splendidly. Thereupon the people went on board, and found Havard Hogvande standing on his

knees at the ship's railing, for his feet had been cut off,* and he had a bow in his hand. When they came on board the ship Havard asked, "Who fell by that shaft?"

They answered, "A man called Gissur."

"Then my luck was less than I thought," said he.

"Great enough was the misfortune," replied they; "but thou shalt not make it greater." And they killed him on the spot.

The dead were then ransacked, and the booty brought all together to be divided; and there were twenty-five ships of the Jomsborg vikings in the booty. So says Tind Halkelson:—

"Many a viking's body lay
Dead on the deck this bloody day,
Before they cut their sun-dried ropes,
And in quick flight put all their hopes.
He whom the ravens know afar
Cleared five-and-twenty ships of war:
A proof that in the furious fight
None can withstand the Norsemen's might."

Then the army dispersed. Earl Hakon went to Throndhjem, and was much displeased that Earl Eirik had given quarter to Vagn Akason. It was said that at this battle Earl Hakon had sacrificed for victory his son, young Erling,† to the gods; and instantly came the hailstorm, and the defeat and slaughter of the Jomsborg vikings.

Earl Eirik went to the Uplands, and eastward by

* This traditionary tale of a warrior fighting on his knees after his legs were cut off, appears to have been a popular idea among the Northmen, and is related by their descendants in the ballad of Chevy Chase.—L.

† It is said that he sacrificed him to Thorgerd Horgabrud, a divinity who, together with Irpa, seems to have been worshipped in Halogaland.

that route to his own kingdom, taking Vagn Akason with him. Earl Eirik married Vagn to Ingibiorg, a daughter of Thorkel Leira, and gave him a good ship of war and all belonging to it, and a crew; and they parted the best of friends. Then Vagn went home south to Denmark, and became afterwards a man of great consideration, and many great people are descended from him.

CHAPTER XLVIII.—*King Harald Grenske's Death.*

Harald Grenske, as before related, was king in Vestfold, and was married to Asta, a daughter of Gudbrand Kula. One summer [994] Harald Grenske made an expedition to the Baltic to gather property, and he came to Svithiod. Olaf Svenske was king there, a son of Eirik the Victorious, and Sigrid, a daughter of Skoglar Toste. Sigrid was then a widow, and had many and great estates in Svithiod. When she heard that her foster-brother was come to the country a short distance from her, she sent men to him to invite him to a feast. He did not neglect the invitation, but came to her with a great attendance of his followers, and was received in the most friendly way. He and the queen sat in the high-seat, and drank together towards the evening, and all his men were entertained in the most hospitable manner. At night, when the king went to rest, a bed was put up for him with a hanging of fine linen around it, and with costly bed-clothes; but in the lodging-house there were few men. When the king was undressed,

and had gone to bed, the queen came to him, filled a bowl herself for him to drink, and was very gay, and pressed him to drink. The king was drunk above measure, and, indeed, so were they both. Then he slept, and the queen went away, and laid herself down also. Sigrid was a woman of the greatest understanding, and too clever in many things. In the morning there was also the most excellent entertainment; but then it went on as usual when people have drunk too much, that next day they take care not to exceed. The queen was very gay, and she and the king talked of many things with each other; among other things she valued her property, and the dominions she had in Svithiod, as nothing less than his kingdom and property in Norway. With that observation the king was nowise pleased; and he found no pleasure in anything after that, but made himself ready for his journey in an ill humour. On the other hand, the queen was remarkably gay, and made him many presents, and followed him out to the road. Now Harald returned about harvest to Norway, and was at home all winter; but was very silent and cast down. In summer he went once more to the Baltic with his ships, and steered to Svithiod. He sent a message to Queen Sigrid that he wished to have a meeting with her, and she rode down to meet him. They talked together, and he soon brought out the proposal that she should marry him. She replied, that this was foolish talk for him, who was so well married already that he might think himself well off. Harald says, "Asta is a good and clever woman; but she is not

so well born as I am." Sigrid replies, "It may be that thou art of higher birth, but I think she is now pregnant with both your fortunes."* They exchanged but few words more before the queen rode away. King Harald was now depressed in mind, and prepared himself again to ride up the country to meet Queen Sigrid. Many of his people dissuaded him; but nevertheless he set off with a great attendance, and came to the house in which the queen dwelt. The same evening came another king, called Vissavald, from Russia, likewise to pay his addresses to Queen Sigrid. Lodging was given to both the kings, and to all their people, in a great old room of an outbuilding, and all the furniture was of the same character; but there was no want of drink in the evening, and that so strong that all were drunk, and the watch, both inside and outside, fell fast asleep. Then Queen Sigrid ordered an attack on them in the night, both with fire and sword. The house was burnt, with all who were in it, and those who slipped out were put to the sword. Sigrid said that she would make these small kings tired of coming to court her. She was afterwards called Sigrid the Haughty.

CHAPTER XLIX.—*Birth of King Olaf, Son of King Harald Grenske.*

This happened the winter after the battle of the Jomsborg vikings at Hiorungavag. When Harald

* This refers to Saint Olaf, Asta's son by Harald.—L.

went up the country after Sigrid, he left Hrane behind with the ships to look after the men. Now when Hrane heard that Harald was cut off, he returned to Norway the shortest way he could, and told the news. He repaired first to Asta, and related to her all that had happened on the journey, and also on what errand Harald had visited Queen Sigrid. When Asta got these tidings she set off directly to her father to the Uplands, who received her well; but both were enraged at the design which had been laid in Svithiod, and that King Harald had intended to set her in a single condition. In summer [995] Asta, Gudbrand's daughter, was confined, and had a boy-child, who had water poured over him, and was called Olaf. Hrane himself poured water over him, and the child was brought up at first in the house of Gudbrand and his mother Asta.

CHAPTER L.—*About Earl Hakon.*

Earl Hakon ruled over the whole outer part of Norway that lies on the sea, and had thus sixteen districts under his sway. The arrangement introduced by Harald Harfager, that there should be an earl in each district, was afterward continued for a long time; and thus Earl Hakon had sixteen earls under him. So says the "Vellekla:"—

"Who before has ever known
Sixteen earls subdued by one?
Who has seen all Norway's land
Conquered by one brave hero's hand?
It will be long in memory held,
How Hakon ruled by sword and shield.

When tales at the viking's mast go round,
His praise will every mouth resound."

While Earl Hakon ruled over Norway there were good crops in the land, and peace was well preserved in the country among the bondes. The earl, for the greater part of his lifetime, was therefore much beloved by the bondes; but it happened, in the longer course of time, that the earl became very intemperate in his intercourse with women, and even carried it so far that he made the daughters of people of consideration be carried away, and brought home to him; and after keeping them a week or two as concubines, he sent them home. He drew upon himself the indignation of the relations of these girls; and the bondes began to murmur loudly, as the Throndhjem people have the custom of doing when anything goes against their judgment.

CHAPTER LI.—*Thorer Klakka's Journey to discover Olaf Trygveson.*

Earl Hakon, in the meantime, hears some whisper that to the westward, over the North Sea, was a man called Ole, who was looked upon as a king. From the conversation of some people, he fell upon the suspicion that he must be of the royal race of Norway. It was, indeed, said that this Ole was from Russia; but the earl had heard that Trygve Olafson had had a son called Olaf, who in his infancy had gone east to Russia, and had been brought up by King Valdemar. The earl had care-

fully inquired about this man, and had his suspicion that he must be the same person who had now come to these western countries. The earl had a very good friend called Thorer Klakka, who had been long upon viking expeditions,—sometimes also upon merchant voyages; so that he was well acquainted all around. This Thorer Earl Hakon sends over the North Sea, and told him to make a merchant voyage to Dublin, as many were in the habit of doing, and carefully to discover who this Ole was. Provided he got any certainty that he was Olaf Trygveson, or any other of the Norwegian royal race, then Thorer should endeavour to ensnare him by some deceit, and bring him into the earl's power.

CHAPTER LII.—*Olaf Trygveson comes to Norway.*

On this Thorer sails westward to Ireland, and hears that Ole is in Dublin with his wife's father King Olaf Kvaran. Thorer, who was a plausible man, immediately got acquainted with Ole; and as they often met, and had long conversations together, Ole began to inquire about news from Norway, and above all of the Upland kings and great people,—which of them were in life, and what dominions they now had. He asked also about Earl Hakon, and if he was much liked in the country. Thorer replies, that the earl is such a powerful man that no one dares to speak otherwise than he would like; but that comes from there being nobody else in the country to look to. "Yet, to say the truth, I know it to be the

mind of many brave men, and of whole communities, that they would much rather see a king of Harald Harfager's race come to the kingdom. But we know of no one suited for this, especially now that it is proved how vain every attack on Earl Hakon must be." As they often talked together in the same strain, Olaf disclosed to Thorer his name and family, and asked him his opinion, and whether he thought the bondes would take him for their king if he were to appear in Norway. Thorer encouraged him very eagerly to the enterprise, and praised him and his talents highly. Then Olaf's inclination to go to the heritage of his ancestors became strong. Olaf sailed accordingly, accompanied by Thorer, with five ships; first to the Ebudes,* and from thence to the Orkneys. At that time Earl Sigurd, Hlodver's son, lay in Osmundswall,† in the island South Ronaldsa, with a ship of war, on his way to Caithness. Just at the same time Olaf was sailing with his fleet from the westward to the islands, and ran into the same harbour, because Pentland Firth was not to be passed at that tide. When the king was informed that the earl was there, he made him be called; and when the earl came on board to speak with the king, after a few

* Pinkerton proves with great learning that Hebrides is a name arising from an error in printing or transcribing, the Hebudes being the true name—the Eybode, or island habitations. Sudreya, or South Isles, is the saga name of the Hebudes, from their situation relatively to Iceland, Fareys, Orkney, and other islands under the dominion of Norway. This name is still preserved in the title of the bishop,—viz. Sodor and Man.—L.

† Osmundswall is the name of a harbour in the island of Walls, opposite to South Ronaldsa, still used for waiting a tide favourable for crossing Pentland Firth.—L.

words only had passed between them, the king says the earl must allow himself to be baptized, and all the people of the country also, or he should be put to death directly; and he assured the earl he would lay waste the islands with fire and sword, if the people did not adopt Christianity. In the position the earl found himself, he preferred becoming Christian, and he and all who were with him were baptized. Afterwards the earl took an oath to the king, went into his service, and gave him his son, whose name was Whelp, or Dog, as an hostage; and the king took Whelp to Norway with him. Thereafter Olaf went out to sea to the eastward, and made the land at Moster Island, where he first touched the ground of Norway. He had high mass sung in a tent, and afterwards on the spot a church was built. Thorer Klakka said now to the king, that the best plan for him would be not to make it known who he was, or to let any report about him get abroad; but to seek out Earl Hakon as fast as possible, and fall upon him by surprise. King Olaf did so, sailing northward day and night, when wind permitted, and did not let the people of the country know who it was that was sailing in such haste. When he came north to Agdanes,* he heard that the earl was in the fiord, and was in discord with the bondes.. On hearing this, Thorer saw that things were going in a very different way from what he expected; for after the battle with the Jomsborg vikings all men in Norway were the most sincere friends of the earl on

* Agdanes, the south point at the mouth of the Throndhjem fiord.—L.

account of the victory he had gained, and of the peace and security he had given to the country; and now it unfortunately turns out that a great chief has come to the country at a time when the bondes are in arms against the earl.

CHAPTER LIII.—*Earl Hakon's Flight.*

Earl Hakon was at a feast in Medalhus in Gaulardal. There was a powerful bonde, by name Orm Lyrgia, who dwelt in Bunes, who had a wife called Gudrun, a daughter of Bergthor of Lundar. She was called the Lunda-sun; for she was the most beautiful of women. The earl sent his slaves to Orm, with the errand that they should bring Orm's wife, Gudrun, to the earl. The thralls tell their errand, and Orm bids them first seat themselves to supper; but before they had done eating, many people from the neighbourhood, to whom Orm had sent notice, had gathered together: and now Orm declared he would not send Gudrun with the messengers. Gudrun told the thralls to tell the earl that she would not come to him, unless he sent Thora of Rimul after her. Thora was a woman of great influence, and one of the earl's best beloved. The thralls say that they will come another time, and both the bonde and his wife would be made to repent of it; and they departed with many threats. Orm, on the other hand, sent out a message-token to all the neighbouring country, and with it the message to attack Earl

Hakon with weapons and kill him.* He sent also a message to Haldor in Skerdingsstedja, who also sent out his message-token. A short time before, the earl had taken away the wife of a man called Bryniolf, and there had very nearly been an insurrection about that business. Having now again got this message-token, the people made a general revolt, and set out all to Medalhus. When the earl heard of this, he left the house with his followers, and concealed himself in a deep glen, now called Earl's Dale. Later in the day, the earl got news of the bondes' army. They had beset all the roads; but believed the earl had escaped to his ships, which his son Erlend, a remarkably handsome and hopeful young man, had the command of. When night came the earl dispersed his people, and ordered them to go through the forest roads into Orkadal; "for nobody will molest you," said he, "when I am not with you. Send a message to Erlend to sail out of the fiord, and meet me in More. In the meantime I will conceal myself from the bondes." Then the earl went his way with one thrall or slave, called Kark, attending him. There was ice upon the river of Gaulardal, and the earl drove his horse upon it, and left his coat lying upon the ice. They then went to a hole, since called the Earl's Hole, where they slept. When Kark awoke he told his dream,—that a black threatening man had come into the hole, and was angry that people should have entered it; and that the man had said, "Ulle

* According to the older Frostathing's law, it was the *duty* of the peasants to attack and kill the king if the latter laid criminal hands on their property or violated the peace and sanctity of their households.

is dead." The earl said that his son Erlend must be killed. Kark slept again, and was again disturbed in his sleep; and when he awoke he told his dream,—that the same man had again appeared to him, and bade him tell the earl that all the Sounds were closed. From this dream the earl began to suspect that it betokened a short life to him. They stood up, and went to the house of Rimul. The earl now sends Kark to Thora, and begs of her to come secretly to him. She did so, and he took it very kind of her, and begged her to conceal him for a few nights until the army of the bondes had dispersed. "Here about my house," said she, "you will be hunted after, both inside and outside; for many know that I would willingly help you if I can. There is but one place about the house where they could never expect to find such a man as you, and that is the swine-stye." When they came there the earl said, "Well, let it be made ready for us; as to save our life is the first and foremost concern." The slave dug a great hole in it, bore away the earth that he dug out, and laid wood over it. Thora brought the tidings to the earl that Olaf Trygveson had come from sea into the fiord, and had killed his son Erlend. Then the earl and Kark both went into the hole. Thora covered it with wood, and threw earth and dung over it, and drove the swine upon the top of it. The swine-stye was under a great stone.

CHAPTER LIV.—*Erlend's Death.*

Olaf Trygveson came from sea into the fiord with five long-ships, and Erlend, Earl Hakon's son, rowed towards him with three ships. When the vessels came near to each other, Erlend suspected they might be enemies, and turned towards the land. When Olaf and his followers saw long-ships coming in haste out of the fiord, and rowing towards them, they thought Earl Hakon must be here; and they put out all oars to follow them. As soon as Erlend and his ships got near the land they rowed aground instantly, jumped overboard, and took to the land; but at the same instant Olaf's ship came up with them. Olaf saw a remarkably handsome man swimming in the water, and laid hold of a tiller and threw it at him. The tiller struck Erlend, the son of Hakon the earl, on the head, and clove it to the brain; and there left Erlend his life. Olaf and his people killed many; but some escaped, and some were made prisoners, and got life and freedom that they might go and tell what had happened. They learned then that the bondes had driven away Earl Hakon, and that he had fled, and his troops were all dispersed.

CHAPTER LV.—*Earl Hakon's Death.*

The bondes then met Olaf, to the joy of both, and they made an agreement together. The bondes took Olaf to be their king, and resolved, one and all, to seek out Earl Hakon. They went up Gaulardal; for it

seemed to them likely that if the earl was concealed in any house it must be at Rimul, for Thora was his dearest friend in that valley. They come up, therefore, and search everywhere, outside and inside the house, but could not find him. Then Olaf held a House Thing or council out in the yard, and stood upon a great stone which lay beside the swine-stye, and made a speech to the people, in which he promised to enrich the man with rewards and honours who should kill the earl. This speech was heard by the earl and the thrall Kark. There was a little day-light admitted to them.

"Why art thou so pale," says the earl, "and now again black as earth? Thou hast not the intention to betray me?"

"By no means," replies Kark.

"We were born on the same night," says the earl, "and the time will be short between our deaths."

King Olaf went away in the evening When night came the earl kept himself awake; but Kark slept, and was disturbed in his sleep. The earl woke him, and asked him "what he was dreaming of?"

He answered, "I was at Lade, and Olaf Trygveson was laying a gold ring about my neck."

The earl says, "It will be a red ring Olaf will lay about thy neck if he catches thee. Take care of that! From me thou shalt enjoy all that is good, therefore betray me not."

They then kept themselves awake both; the one, as it were, watching upon the other. But towards day the earl suddenly dropped asleep; but his sleep

was so unquiet that he drew his heels under him, and raised his neck, as if going to rise, and screamed dreadfully high. On this Kark, dreadfully alarmed, drew a large knife out of his belt, stuck it in the earl's throat, and cut it across, and killed Earl Hakon. Then Kark cut off the earl's head, and ran away. Late in the day he came to Lade, where he delivered the earl's head to King Olaf, and told all these circumstances of his own and Earl Hakon's doings. Olaf had him taken out and beheaded.

Chapter LVI.—*Earl Hakon's Head.*

King Olaf, and a vast number of bondes with him, then went out to Nidarholm,* and had with them the heads of Earl Hakon and Kark. This holm was used then for a place of execution of thieves and ill-doers, and there stood a gallows on it. He had the heads of the earl and of Kark hung upon it, and the whole army of the bondes cast stones at them, screaming and shouting that the one worthless fellow had followed the other. They then sent up to Gaulardal for the earl's dead body. So great was the enmity of the Throndhjem people against Earl Hakon, that no man could venture to call him by any other name than Hakon the Bad; and he was so called long after those days. Yet, sooth to say of Earl Hakon, he was in many respects fitted to be a chief: first, because he was descended from a high race; then because he had understanding and know-

* Now Munkholm, opposite to the town of Throndhjem.—L.

ledge to direct a government; also manly courage in battle to gain victories, and good luck in killing his enemies. So says Thorleif Raudfeldson *:—

"In Norway's land was never known
A braver earl than the brave Hakon.
At sea, beneath the clear moon's light,
No braver man e'er sought the fight.
Nine kings to Odin's wide domain
Were sent, by Hakon's right hand slain!
So well the raven-flocks were fed—
So well the wolves were filled with dead!"

Earl Hakon was very generous; but the greatest misfortunes attended even such a chief at the end of his days: and the great cause of this was that the time was come when heathen sacrifices and idolatrous worship were doomed to fall, and the holy faith and good customs to come in their place.

CHAPTER LVII.—*Olaf Trygveson elected King at a General Thing.*

Olaf Trygveson was chosen at Throndhjem by the General Thing to be the king over the whole country, as Harald Harfager had been. The whole public and the people throughout all the land would listen to nothing else than that Olaf Trygveson should be king. Then Olaf went round the whole country, and brought it under his rule, and all the people of Norway gave in their submission; and also the chiefs in the Uplands and in Viken, who before had held their lands as fiefs from the Danish king, now became

* Thorleif Raudfeldson (Red Cloak's son), is mentioned in *Landnama* and in *Svarfdaela*.

King Olaf's men, and held their lands from him. He went thus through the whole country during the first winter [996] and the following summer. Earl Eirik, the son of Earl Hakon, his brother Svein, and their friends and relations, fled out of the country, and went east to Sweden to King Olaf the Swede, who gave them a good reception. So says Thord Kolbeinson :—

"O thou whom bad men drove away,
After the bondes, by foul play,
Took Hakon's life ! Fate will pursue
These bloody wolves, and make them rue.
When the host came from out the West,
Like some tall stately war-ship's mast,
I saw the son of Trygve stand,
Surveying proud his native land."

And again,—

"Eirik has more upon his mind,
Against the new Norse king designed,
Than by his words he seems to show—
And truly it may well be so.
Stubborn and stiff are Throndhjem men,
But Throndhjem's earl may come again ;
In Swedish land he knows no rest—
Fierce wrath is gathering in his breast."

CHAPTER LVIII.—*Lodin's Marriage.*

Lodin was the name of a man from Viken who was rich and of good family. He went often on merchant voyages, and sometimes on viking cruises. It happened one summer that he went on a merchant voyage with much merchandise in a ship of his own. He directed his course first to Esthonia, and was there at a market in summer. To the place at which

the market was held many merchant goods were brought, and also many thralls or slaves for sale. There Lodin saw a woman who was to be sold as a slave; and on looking at her he knew her to be Astrid, Eirik's daughter, who had been married to King Trygve. But now she was altogether unlike what she had been when he last saw her; for now she was pale, meagre in countenance, and ill clad. He went up to her, and asked her how matters stood with her. She replied, "It is heavy to be told; for I have been sold as a slave, and now again I am brought here for sale." After speaking together a little Astrid knew him, and begged him to buy her, and bring her home to her friends. "On this condition," said he, "I will bring thee home to Norway,—that thou wilt marry me." Now as Astrid stood in great need, and moreover knew that Lodin was a man of high birth, rich, and brave, she promised to do so for her ransom. Lodin accordingly bought Astrid, took her home to Norway with him, and married her with her friends' consent. Their children were Thorkel Nefia, Ingirid, and Ingigerd. Ingibjorg and Astrid were daughters of Astrid by King Trygve. Eirik Biodaskalle's sons were Sigurd Karlshofud, Jostein, and Thorkel Dydril, who were all rich and brave people who had estates east in the country. In Viken, in the east, dwelt two brothers, rich and of good descent; one called Thorgeir, and the other Hyrning; and they married Lodin and Astrid's daughters, Ingirid and Ingigerd.

CHAPTER LIX.—*King Olaf Baptizes the Country of Viken.*

When Harald Gormson, king of Denmark, had adopted Christianity, he sent a message over all his kingdom that all people should be baptized, and converted to the true faith. He himself followed his message, and used power and violence where nothing else would do. He sent two earls, Urguthriot and Brimilskiar, with many people to Norway, to proclaim Christianity there.* In Viken, which stood directly under the king's power, this succeeded, and many were baptized of the country folk. But when Svein Forked-beard, immediately after his father King Harald's death, went out on war expeditions in Saxon-land, Friesland, and at last in England, the Northmen who had taken up Christianity returned back to heathen sacrifices, just as before; and the people in the north of the country did the same. But now [996] that Olaf Trygveson was king of Norway, he remained long during the summer in Viken, where many of his relatives and some of his brothers-in-law were settled, and also many who had been great friends of his father; so that he was received with the greatest affection. Olaf called together his mother's brothers, his stepfather Lodin, and his brothers-in-law Thorgeir and Hyrning, to speak with them, and to disclose with the greatest care the business which he de-

* In the *Jomsvikinga Saga* it is stated that Emperor Otto sent the earls. Their names are neither Norse nor German, and no trace is to be found of them in German sources.

sired they themselves should approve of, and support with all their power; namely, the proclaiming Christianity over all his kingdom. He would, he declared, either bring it to this, that all Norway should be Christian, or die. "I shall make you all," said he, "great and mighty men in promoting this work; for I trust to you most, as blood relations or brothers-in-law." All agreed to do what he asked, and to follow him in what he desired. King Olaf immediately made it known to the public that he recommended Christianity to all the people in his kingdom, which message was well received and approved of by those who had before given him their promise; and these being the most powerful among the people assembled, the others followed their example, and all the inhabitants of the east part of Viken allowed themselves to be baptized. The king then went to the north part of Viken, and invited every man to accept Christianity; and those who opposed him he punished severely, killing some, mutilating others, and driving some into banishment. At length he brought it so far, that all the kingdom which his father King Trygve had ruled over, and also that of his relation Harald Grenske, accepted of Christianity; and during that summer [996] and the following winter [997] all Viken was made Christian.

CHAPTER LX.—*Of the Hordaland People.*

Early in spring [997] King Olaf set out from Viken with a great force northwards to Agder, and proclaimed that every man should be baptized. And thus the

people received Christianity, for nobody dared oppose the king's will, wheresoever he came. In Hordaland, however, were many bold and great men of Hordakare's race. He, namely, had left four sons,—the first Thorleif Spake; the second, Ogmund, father of Thorolf Skialg, who was father of Erling of Sole; the third was Thord, father of the Herse Klyp who killed King Sigurd Slefa, Gunhild's son; and lastly, Olmod, father of Askel, whose son was Aslak Fitiaskalle; and that family branch was the greatest and most considered in Hordaland. Now when this family heard the bad tidings, that the king was coming along the country from the eastward with a great force, and was breaking the ancient law of the people, and imposing punishment and hard conditions on all who opposed him, the relatives appointed a meeting to take counsel with each other, for they knew the king would come down upon them at once; and they all resolved to appear in force at the Gula-Thing, there to hold a conference with King Olaf Trygveson.

CHAPTER LXI.—*Rogaland Baptized.*

When King Olaf came to Rogaland, he immediately summoned the people to a Thing; and when the bondes received the message-token for a Thing, they assembled in great numbers well armed. After they had come together, they resolved to choose three men, the best speakers of the whole, who should answer King Olaf, and argue with the king; and especially should decline to accept of anything against

the old law, even if the king should require it of them. Now when the bondes came to the Thing, and the Thing was formed, King Olaf arose, and at first spoke good-humouredly to the people; but they observed he wanted them to accept Christianity, with all his fine words: and in the conclusion he let them know that those who should speak against him, and not submit to his proposal, must expect his displeasure and punishment, and all the ill that it was in his power to inflict. When he had ended his speech, one of the bondes stood up, who was considered the most eloquent, and who had been chosen as the first who should reply to King Olaf. But when he would begin to speak such a cough seized him, and such a difficulty of breathing, that he could not bring out a word, and had to sit down again. Then another bonde stood up, resolved not to let an answer be wanting, although it had gone so ill with the former; but he became so confused that he could not find a word to say, and all present set up a laughter, amid which the bonde sat down again. And now the third stood up to make a speech against King Olaf's; but when he began he became so hoarse and husky in his throat, that nobody could hear a word he said, and he also had to sit down. There was none of the bondes now to speak against the king, and as nobody answered him there was no opposition; and it came to this, that all agreed to what the king had proposed. All the people of the Thing accordingly were baptized before the Thing was dissolved.

Chapter LXII.—*Erling Skialgson's Wooing.*

King Olaf went with his men-at-arms to the Gula-Thing; for the bondes had sent him word that they would reply there to his speech. When both parties had come to the Thing, the king desired first to have a conference with the chief people of the country; and when the meeting was numerous the king set forth his errand,—that he desired them, according to his proposal, to allow themselves to be baptized. Then said Olmod the Old, "We relations have considered together this matter, and have come to one resolution. If thou thinkest, king, to force us who are related together to such things as to break our old law, or to bring us under thyself by any sort of violence, then will we stand against thee with all our might: and be the victory to him to whom fate ordains it. But if thou, king, wilt advance our relations' fortunes, then thou shalt have leave to do as thou desirest, and we will all serve thee with zeal in thy purpose."

The king replies, "What do you propose for obtaining this agreement?"

Then answers Olmod, "The first is, that thou wilt give thy sister Astrid in marriage to Erling Skialgson, our relation, whom we look upon as the most hopeful young man in all Norway."

King Olaf replied, that this marriage appeared to him also very suitable; "as Erling is a man of good birth, and a good-looking man in appearance: but Astrid herself must answer to this proposal."

Thereupon the king spoke to his sister. She said, "It is but of little use that I am a king's sister, and a king's daughter, if I must marry a man who has no high dignity or office. I will rather wait a few years for a better match." Thus ended this conference.

CHAPTER LXIII.—*Hordaland Baptized.*

King Olaf took a falcon that belonged to Astrid, plucked off all its feathers, and then sent it to her. Then said Astrid, "Angry is my brother." And she stood up, and went to the king, who received her kindly; and she said that she left it to the king to determine her marriage. "I think," said the king, "that I must have power enough in this land to raise any man I please to high dignity." Then the king ordered Olmod and Erling to be called to a conference, and all their relations; and the marriage was determined upon, and Astrid betrothed to Erling. Thereafter the king held the Thing, and recommended Christianity to the bondes; and as Olmod, and Erling, and all their relations, took upon themselves the most active part in forwarding the king's desire, nobody dared to speak against it; and all the people were baptized, and adopted Christianity.

CHAPTER LXIV.—*Erling Skialgson's Wedding.*

Erling Skialgson held his wedding in summer, and a great many people were assembled at it. King Olaf was also there, and offered Erling an earldom.

Erling replied thus: "All my relations have been herses only, and I will take no higher title than they have; but this I will accept from thee, king, that thou makest me the greatest of that title in the country." The king consented; and at his departure the king invested his brother-in-law Erling with all the land north of the Sognefiord, and east to the Lidandisnes,* on the same terms as Harald Harfager had given land to his sons, as before related.

CHAPTER LXV.—*Raumsdal and the Fjord-districts Baptized.*

The same harvest King Olaf summoned the bondes to a Thing of the four districts at Dragseid, in Stad; and there the people from Sogn, the Fiord-districts, South More, and Raumsdal, were summoned to meet. King Olaf came there with a great many people who had followed him from the eastward, and also with those who had joined him from Rogaland and Hordaland. When the king came to the Thing, he proposed to them there, as elsewhere, Christianity; and as the king had such a powerful host with him, they were frightened. The king offered them two conditions, —either to accept Christianity, or to fight. But the bondes saw they were in no condition to fight the king, and resolved, therefore, that all the people should agree to be baptized. The king proceeded afterwards to North More, and baptized all that district. He then sailed to Lade, in Throndhjem; had the temple there rased to the ground; took all the ornaments

* The Naze of Norway is called Lidandisnes in the sagas.—L.

and all property out of the temple, and from the gods in it; and among other things the great gold ring which Earl Hakon had ordered to be made, and which hung in the door of the temple; and then had the temple burnt. But when the bondes heard of this, they sent out a war-arrow as a token through the whole district, ordering out a warlike force, and intended to meet the king with it. In the meantime King Olaf sailed with a war-force out of the fiord along the coast northward, intending to proceed to Halogaland, and baptize there. When he came north to Bjarnaurar, he heard from Halogaland that a force was assembled there to defend the country against the king. The chiefs of this force were Harek of Thiotta, Thorer Hiort from Vagar, and Eyvind Kinrifa. Now when King Olaf heard this, he turned about and sailed southwards along the land; and when he got south of Stad proceeded at his leisure, and came early in winter [998] all the way east to Viken.

CHAPTER LXVI.—*King Olaf proposes Marriage to Queen Sigrid the Haughty.*

Queen Sigrid in Svithiod, who had for surname the Haughty, sat in her mansion, and during the same winter messengers went between King Olaf and Sigrid to propose his courtship to her, and she had no objection; and the matter was fully and fast resolved upon. Thereupon King Olaf sent to Queen Sigrid the great gold ring he had taken from the temple door of Lade,

which was considered a distinguished ornament. The meeting for concluding the business was appointed to be in spring on the frontier, at the Gaut river. Now the ring which King Olaf had sent Queen Sigrid was highly prized by all men; yet the queen's goldsmiths, two brothers, who took the ring in their hands, and weighed it, spoke quietly to each other about it, and in a manner that made the queen call them to her, and ask "what they smiled at?" But they would not say a word, and she commanded them to say what it was they had discovered. Then they said the ring is false. Upon this she ordered the ring to be broken into pieces, and it was found to be copper inside.* Then the queen was enraged, and said that Olaf would deceive her in more ways than this one. In the same year [998] King Olaf went into Ringerike, and there the people also were baptized.

CHAPTER LXVII.—*Olaf Haraldson Baptized.*

Asta, the daughter of Gudbrand, soon after the fall of Harald Grenske married again a man who was called Sigurd Syr, who was a king in Ringerike. Sigurd was a son of Halfdan, and grandson of Sigurd Hrise, who was a son of Harald Harfager. Olaf, the son of Asta and Harald Grenske, lived with Asta, and was brought up from childhood in the house of his stepfather, Sigurd Syr. Now when King Olaf Trygveson came to Ringerike to spread Chris-

* In the National Historical Museum in Stockholm there are two spiral rings. They are made of copper and plated or covered with silver.

tianity, Sigurd Syr and his wife allowed themselves to be baptized, along with Olaf her son; and Olaf Trygveson was godfather to Olaf, the stepson of Harald Grenske. Olaf was then three years old. King Olaf returned from thence to Viken, where he remained all winter. He had now been three years king in Norway [998].

Chapter LXVIII.—*Meeting of King Olaf and Sigrid the Haughty at Konungahella.*

Early in spring [998] King Olaf went eastwards to Konungahella to the meeting with Queen Sigrid; and when they met the business was considered about which the winter before they had held communication, namely, their marriage; and the business seemed likely to be concluded. But when Olaf insisted that Sigrid should let herself be baptized, she answered thus:—"I must not part from the faith which I have held, and my forefathers before me; and, on the other hand, I shall make no objection to your believing in the god that pleases you best." Then King Olaf was enraged, and answered in a passion, "Why should I care to have thee, an old faded woman, and a heathen jade?" and therewith struck her in the face with his glove which he held in his hands, rose up, and they parted. Sigrid said, "This may some day be thy death." The king set off to Viken, the queen to Svithiod.

CHAPTER LXIX.—*The Burning of Warlocks.*

Then the king proceeded to Viken, and held a Thing, at which he declared in a speech that all the men of whom it should be known to a certainty that they dealt with evil spirits, or in witchcraft, or were sorcerers, should be banished forth of the land. Thereafter the king had all the neighbourhood ransacked after such people, and called them all before him; and when they were brought to the Thing there was a man among them called Eyvind Kelda, a grandson of Ragnvald Rettilbeine, Harald Harfager's son. Eyvind was a sorcerer, and particularly knowing in witchcraft. The king let all these men be seated in one room, which was well adorned, and made a great feast for them, and gave them strong drink in plenty. Now when they were all very drunk, he ordered the house to be set on fire, and it and all the people within it were consumed, all but Eyvind Kelda, who contrived to escape by the smoke-hole in the roof. And when he had got a long way off, he met some people on the road going to the king, and he told them to tell the king that Eyvind Kelda had slipped away from the fire, and would never come again in King Olaf's power, but would carry on his arts of witchcraft as much as ever. When the people came to the king with such a message from Eyvind, the king was ill pleased that Eyvind had escaped death.

CHAPTER LXX.—*Eyvind Kelda's Death.*

When spring [998] came King Olaf went out to Viken, and was on visits to his great farms. He sent notice over all Viken that he would call out an army in summer, and proceed to the north parts of the country. Then he went north to Agder; and when Easter was approaching he took the road to Rogaland with 300 men, and came on Easter evening north to Augvaldsnes, in Karmt Island, where an Easter feast was prepared for him. That same night came Eyvind Kelda to the island with a well-manned long-ship, of which the whole crew consisted of sorcerers and other dealers with evil spirits. Eyvind went from his ship to the land with his followers, and there they played many of their pranks of witchcraft. Eyvind clothed them with caps of darkness, and so thick a mist that the king and his men could see nothing of them; but when they came near to the house at Augvaldsnes, it became clear day. Then it went differently from what Eyvind had intended; for now there came just such a darkness over him and his comrades in witchcraft as they had made before, so that they could see no more from their eyes than from the back of their heads, but went round and round in a circle upon the island. When the king's watchmen saw them going about, without knowing what people these were, they told the king. Thereupon he rose up with his people, put on his clothes, and when he saw Eyvind with his men wandering about he ordered his men to arm, and

examine what folk these were. The king's men discovered it was Eyvind, took him and all his company prisoners, and brought them to the king. Eyvind now told all he had done on his journey. Then the king ordered them all to be taken out to a skerry which was under water in flood tide, and there to be left bound. Eyvind and all with him left their lives on this rock, and the skerry is still called Skrattasker.*

CHAPTER LXXI.—*Of King Olaf and Odin's Apparition.*

It is related that once on a time King Olaf was at a feast at this Augvaldsnes, and one eventide there came to him an old man very gifted in words, and with a broad-brimmed hat upon his head. He was one-eyed, and had something to tell of every land. He entered into conversation with the king; and as the king found much pleasure in the guest's speech, he asked him concerning many things, to which the guest gave good answers: and the king sat up late in the evening. Among other things, the king asked him if he knew who the Augvald had been who had given his name both to the ness and to the house. The guest replied, that this Augvald was a king, and a very valiant man, and that he made great sacrifices to a cow which he had with him wherever he went, and considered it good for his health to drink her milk. This same King Augvald had a battle with a king called Varin, in which battle Augvald fell. He was buried under a mound close to the house; "and

* Skrattasker—Skerry of sorcerers.

there stands his stone over him,* and close to it his cow also is laid." Such and many other things, and ancient events, the king enquired after. Now, when the king had sat late into the night, the bishop reminded him that it was time to go to bed, and the king did so. But after the king was undressed, and had laid himself in bed, the guest sat upon the foot-stool before the bed, and still spoke long with the king; for after one tale was ended, he still wanted a new one. Then the bishop observed to the king, it was time to go to sleep, and the king did so; and the guest went out. Soon after the king awoke, asked for the guest, and ordered him to be called; but the guest was not to be found. The morning after, the king ordered his cook and cellar-master to be called, and asked if any strange person had been with them. They said, that as they were making ready the meat a man came to them, and observed that they were cooking very poor meat for the king's table; whereupon he gave them two thick and fat pieces of beef, which they boiled with the rest of the meat. Then the king ordered that all the meat should be thrown away, and said this man can be no other than the Odin whom the heathen have so long worshipped; and added, "but Odin shall not deceive us."

CHAPTER LXXII.—*The Thing in Throndhjem.*

King Olaf collected a great army in the east of the country towards summer, and sailed with it north to

* The highest bauta or standing stone to be found in Norway stands near the church at Augvaldsnes.

Nidaros in the Throndhjem country. From thence he sent a message-token over all the fiord, calling the people of eight different districts to a Thing; but the bondes changed the Thing-token into a war-token; and called together all men, free and unfree,* in all the Throndhjem land. Now when the king met the Thing, the whole people came fully armed. After the Thing was seated, the king spoke, and invited them to adopt Christianity; but he had only spoken a short time when the bondes called out to him to be silent, or they would attack him and drive him away. "We did so," said they, "with Hakon foster-son of Athelstan, when he brought us the same message, and we held him in quite as much respect as we hold thee." When King Olaf saw how incensed the bondes were, and that they had such a war force that he could make no resistance, he turned his speech as if he would give way to the bondes, and said, "I wish only to be in a good understanding with you as of old; and I will come to where ye hold your greatest sacrifice-festival, and see your customs, and thereafter we shall consider which to hold by." And in this all agreed; and as the king spoke mildly and friendly

* 'Thegn oc Thræl" is the expression in the Icelandic text; and the term Thegn or Thane occurs rarely, if at all, in any other passage of the early sagas. Bonde, it is evident, was a word applied only to landowners; and to this general meeting all men of the highest and of the lowest class, and not merely the men having right as bondes to sit in the Law Things, were summoned by the bondes. Thegn has been a more comprehensive term than Bonde, and means here a free proprietor of any kind of property. The bondes or landed proprietors only are spoken of at Law Things, and no mention of thegns is made at Things, or on any other occasion.—L.

with the bondes, their anger was appeased, and their conference with the king went off peacefully. At the close of it a midsummer sacrifice was fixed to take place in Mærin,* and all chiefs and great bondes to attend it as usual. The king was to be at it.

CHAPTER LXXIII.—*Of Skegge, or Iron Beard.*

There was a great bonde called Skegge, and sometimes Jarnskegge, or Iron Beard, who dwelt in Uphaug in Yrjar. He spoke first at the Thing to Olaf; and was the foremost man of the bondes in speaking against Christianity. The Thing was concluded in this way for that time,—the bondes returned home, and the king went to Lade.

CHAPTER LXXIV.—*The Feast at Lade.*

King Olaf lay with his ships in the river Nid, and had thirty vessels, which were manned with many brave people; but the king himself was often at Lade with his court attendants. As the time now was approaching at which the sacrifices should be made at Mærin, the king prepared a great feast at Lade, and sent a message to the districts of Strind, Gaulardal, and out to Orkadal, to invite the chiefs and other great bondes. When the feast was ready, and the chiefs assembled, there was a handsome entertainment the first evening, at which plenty of liquor went round, and the guests were made very drunk.

* At Mærin, the site of the ancient temple in the Throndhjem district, a large mound still remains with the name Mæren.—L.

The night after they all slept in peace. The following morning, when the king was dressed, he had the early mass sung before him; and when the mass was over, ordered to sound the trumpets for a House Thing: upon which all his men left the ships to come up to the Thing. When the Thing was seated, the king stood up, and spoke thus:—"We held a Thing at Frosta, and there I invited the bondes to allow themselves to be baptized; but they, on the other hand, invited me to offer sacrifice to their gods, as King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, had done; and thereafter it was agreed upon between us that we should meet at Mærin, and there make a great sacrifice. Now if I, along with you, shall turn again to making sacrifice, then will I make the greatest of sacrifices that are in use; and I will sacrifice men. But I will not select slaves or malefactors for this, but will take the greatest men only to be offered to the gods; and for this I select Orm Lygra of Medalhus, Styrkar of Gimsar, Kar of Gryting, Asbiorn Thorbergson of Varnes, Orm of Lyxa, Haldor of Skerdingsstedia;" and besides these he named five others of the principal men. All these, he said, he would offer in sacrifice to the gods for peace and a fruitful season; and ordered them to be laid hold of immediately. Now when the bondes saw that they were not strong enough to make head against the king, they asked for peace, and submitted wholly to the king's pleasure. So it was settled that all the bondes who had come there should be baptized, and should take an oath to the king to hold by the right

faith, and to renounce sacrifice to the gods. The king then kept all these men as hostages who came to his feast, until they sent him their sons, brothers, or other near relations.

CHAPTER LXXV.—*Of the Thing in Throndhjem.*

King Olaf went in with all his forces into the Throndhjem country; and when he came to Mærin all among the chiefs of the Throndhjem people who were most opposed to Christianity were assembled, and had with them all the great bondes who had before made sacrifice at that place. There was thus a greater multitude of bondes than there had been at the Frosta-Thing. Now the king let the people be summoned to the Thing, where both parties met armed; and when the Thing was seated the king made a speech, in which he told the people to go over to Christianity. Jarnskegge replies on the part of bondes, and says that the will of the bondes is now, as formerly, that the king should not break their laws. "We want, king," said he, "that thou shouldst offer sacrifice, as other kings before thee have done." All the bondes applauded his speech with a loud shout, and said they would have all things according to what Skegge said. Then the king said he would go into the temple of their gods with them, and see what the practices were when they sacrificed. The bondes thought well of this proceeding, and both parties went to the temple.

CHAPTER LXXVI.—*The Throndhjem People Baptized.*

Now King Olaf entered into the temple with some few of his men and a few bondes; and when the king came to where their gods were, Thor, as the most considered among their gods, sat there adorned with gold and silver. The king lifted up his gold-inlaid axe which he carried in his hands, and struck Thor so that the image rolled down from its seat. Then the king's men turned to and threw down all the gods from their seats; and while the king was in the temple, Jarnskegge was killed outside of the temple doors, and the king's men did it. When the king came forth out of the temple he offered the bondes two conditions,—that all should accept of Christianity forthwith, or that they should fight with him. But as Skegge was killed, there was no leader in the bondes' army to raise the banner against King Olaf; so they took the other condition, to surrender to the king's will and obey his order. Then King Olaf had all the people present baptized, and took hostages from them for their remaining true to Christianity; and he sent his men round to every district, and no man in the Throndhjem country opposed Christianity, but all people took baptism.

CHAPTER LXXVII.—*Of the Building of the Town in the Throndhjem Country.*

King Olaf with his people went out to Nidaros, and made houses on the flat side of the river Nid,

which he raised to be a merchant town, and gave people ground to build houses upon. The king's house he had built just opposite the ships' creek; and he transported to it, in harvest, all that was necessary for his winter residence, and had many people about him there.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.—*King Olaf's Marriage.*

King Olaf appointed a meeting with the relations of Jarnskegge, and offered them the compensation or penalty for his bloodshed; for there were many bold men who had an interest in that business. Jarnskegge had a daughter called Gudrun; and at last it was agreed upon between the parties that the king should take her in marriage. When the wedding-day came King Olaf and Gudrun went to bed together. As soon as Gudrun, the first night they lay together, thought the king was asleep, she drew a knife, with which she intended to run him through; but the king saw it, took the knife from her, got out of bed, and went to his men, and told them what had happened. Gudrun also took her clothes, and went away along with all her men who had followed her thither. Gudrun never came into the king's bed again.

CHAPTER LXXIX.—*Building of the Ship Crane.*

The same autumn [998] King Olaf laid the keel of a great long-ship out on the strand at the river

Nid. It was a snekke;* and he employed many carpenters upon her, so that early in winter the vessel was ready. It had thirty benches for rowers, was high in stem and stern, but was not broad. The king called this ship Tranan (the Crane). After Jarnskegge's death his body was carried to Yrjar, and lies there in the Skegge mound on Austrat.†

CHAPTER LXXX.—*Thangbrand the Priest goes to Iceland.*

When King Olaf Trygveson had been two years king of Norway [997], there was a Saxon priest in his house who was called Thangbrand, a passionate, ungovernable man, and a great man-slayer; but he was a good scholar, and a clever man. The king would not have him in his house upon account of his misdeeds; but gave him the errand to go to Iceland, and bring that land to the Christian faith.‡ The king gave him a merchant vessel; and, as far as we know of this voyage of his, he landed first in Iceland at Eastfiord, in the southern Alptafiord, and passed the winter in the house of Hal of Sida. Thangbrand proclaimed Christianity in Iceland, and on his persuasion Hal and all his house people,

* A snekke (Icelandic snekkja) appears to have been a denomination of one class of longships or ships of war. The word snek is still used in the north of Scotland for quick, nimble; and the word snekkja probably denoted the qualities we understand by a cutter or fast vessel. A dragon appears to have been applied to a heavier class of ships of war. The ships of burden, last-ships, appear to have been built on a different model.—L.

† Now Osteraad, where there still is a great mound called Skegge's Mound.

‡ Bishop Fredrik and Thorvald Kodranson had already preached Christianity in Iceland during the years 981–986.

and many other chiefs, allowed themselves to be baptized;* but there were many more who spoke against it. Thorvald Veile and Veterlide the skald composed a satire about Thangbrand; but he killed them both outright. Thangbrand was two years in Iceland, and was the death of three men before he left it.

CHAPTER LXXXI.—*Of Sigurd and Hauk.*

There was a man called Sigurd, and another called Hauk, both of Halogaland, who often made merchant voyages. One summer they had made a voyage westward to England; and when they came back to Norway they sailed northwards along the coast, and at North More they met King Olaf's people. When it was told the king that some Halogaland people were come who were heathen, he ordered the steersmen to be brought to him, and he asked them if they would consent to be baptized; to which they replied, no. The king spoke with them in many ways, but to no purpose. He then threatened them with death and torture; but they would not allow themselves to be moved. He then had them laid in irons, and kept them in chains in his house for some time, and often conversed with them, but in vain. At last one night they disappeared, without any man being able to conjecture how they got away. But about harvest they came north to Harek of Thiotta, who

* Among those baptized by Thangbrand in Iceland were also Gissur the White, Hjalte Skeggjason, and Hal Thorarinson. Thjodrek the Monk says Thangbrand came from Flanders.

received them kindly, and with whom they stopped all winter [999], and were hospitably entertained.

CHAPTER LXXXII.—*Of Harek of Thiotta.*

It happened one good-weather day in spring that Harek was at home in his house with only few people, and time hung heavy on his hands. Sigurd asked him if he would row a little for amusement. Harek was willing; and they went to the shore, and drew down a six-oared skiff; and Sigurd took the mast and rigging belonging to the boat out of the boat-house, for they often used to sail when they went for amusement on the water. Harek went out into the boat to hang the rudder. The brothers Sigurd and Hauk, who were very strong men, were fully armed, as they were used to go about at home among the peasants. Before they went out to the boat they threw into her some butter-kits and a bread-chest, and carried between them a great keg of ale. When they had rowed a short way from the island the brothers hoisted the sail, while Harek was seated at the helm; and they sailed away from the island. Then the two brothers went aft to where Harek the bonde was sitting; and Sigurd says to him, "Now thou must choose one of these conditions,—first, that we brothers direct this voyage; or, if not, that we bind thee fast and take the command; or, third, that we kill thee." Harek saw how matters stood with him. As a single man, he was not better than one of those brothers, even if he had been as well

armed; so it appeared to him wisest to let them determine the course to steer, and bound himself by oath to abide by this condition. On this Sigurd took the helm, and steered south along the land, the brothers taking particular care that they did not encounter people. The wind was very favourable; and they held on sailing along until they came south to Throndhjem and to Nidaros, where they found the king. Then the king called Harek to him, and in a conference desired him to be baptized. Harek made objections; and although the king and Harek talked over it many times, sometimes in the presence of other people, and sometimes alone, they could not agree upon it. At last the king says to Harek, "Now thou mayest return home, and I will do thee no injury; partly because we are related together, and partly that thou mayest not have it to say that I caught thee by a trick: but know for certain that I intend to come north next summer to visit you Halogalanders, and ye shall then see if I am not able to punish those who reject Christianity." Harek was well pleased to get away as fast as he could. King Olaf gave Harek a good boat of ten or twelve pair of oars, and let it be fitted out with the best of everything needful; and besides he gave Harek thirty men, all lads of mettle, and well appointed.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.—*Eyvind Kinrifa's Death.*

Harek of Thiotta went away from the town as fast as he could; but Hauk and Sigurd remained

in the king's house, and both took baptism. Harek pursued his voyage until he came to Thiotta. He sent immediately a message to his friend Eyvind Kinrifa, with the word that he had been with King Olaf; but would not let himself be cowed down to accept Christianity. The message at the same time informed him that King Olaf intended coming to the north in summer against them, and they must be at their posts to defend themselves; it also begged Eyvind to come and visit him, the sooner the better. When this message was delivered to Eyvind, he saw how very necessary it was to devise some counsel to avoid falling into the king's hands. He set out, therefore, in a light vessel with a few hands as fast as he could. When he came to Thiotta he was received by Harek in the most friendly way, and they immediately entered into conversation with each other behind the house. When they had spoken together but a short time, King Olaf's men, who had secretly followed Harek to the north, came up, and took Eyvind prisoner, and carried him away to their ship. They did not halt on their voyage until they came to Throndhjem, and presented themselves to King Olaf at Nidaros. Then Eyvind was brought up to a conference with the king, who asked him to allow himself to be baptized, like other people; but Eyvind decidedly answered he would not. The king still, with persuasive words, urged him to accept Christianity, and both he and the bishop used many suitable arguments; but Eyvind would not allow himself to be

moved. The king offered him gifts and great fiefs, but Eyvind refused all. Then the king threatened him with tortures and death, but Eyvind was steadfast. Then the king ordered a pan of glowing coals to be placed upon Eyvind's belly, which burst asunder. Eyvind cried, "Take away the pan, and I will say something before I die," which also was done. The king said, "Wilt thou now, Eyvind, believe in Christ?" "No," said Eyvind, "I can take no baptism; for I am an evil spirit put into a man's body by the sorcery of Fins, because in no other way could my father and mother have a child." With that died Eyvind, who had been one of the greatest sorcerers.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.—*Halogaland made Christian.*

The spring after [999] King Olaf fitted out and manned his ships, and commanded himself his ship Tranan. He had many and smart people with him; and when he was ready, he sailed northwards with his fleet past Byrda, and to Halogaland. Wheresoever he came to the land, or to the islands, he held a Thing, and told the people to accept the right faith, and to be baptized. No man dared to say anything against it, and the whole country he passed through was made Christian. King Olaf was a guest in the house of Harek of Thiotta, who was baptized with all his people. At parting the king gave Harek good presents; and he entered into the king's service, and got fiefs, and the privileges of lendsman from the king.

Chapter LXXXV.—*Thorer Hiort's Death.*

There was a bonde, by name Raud the Strong, who dwelt in Godey in Salten fiord. Raud was a very rich man, who had many house servants; and likewise was a powerful man, who had many Fins in his service when he wanted them. Raud was a great idolater, and very skilful in witchcraft, and was a great friend of Thorer Hiort, before spoken of. Both were great chiefs. Now when they heard that King Olaf was coming with a great force from the south to Halogaland, they gathered together an army, ordered out ships, and they too had a great force on foot. Raud had a large ship with a gilded head formed like a dragon, which ship had thirty rowing benches, and even for that kind of ship was very large. Thorer Hiort had also a large ship. These men sailed southwards with their ships against King Olaf, and as soon as they met gave battle. A great battle there was, and a great fall of men; but principally on the side of the Halogalanders, whose ships were cleared of men, so that a great terror came upon them. Raud rode with his dragon out to sea, and set sail. Raud had always a fair wind whereso-ever he wished to sail, which came from his arts of witchcraft; and, to make a short story, he came home to Godey.* Thorer Hiort fled from the ships up to the land; but King Olaf landed people, followed those who fled, and killed them. Usually the king was the foremost in such skirmishes, and was so

* Ey is Icelandic for island.

now. When the king saw where Thorer Hiort, who was quicker on foot than any man, was running to, he ran after him with his dog Vige. The king said, "Vige! Vige! catch the deer." * Vige ran straight in upon him; on which Thorer halted, and the king threw a spear at him. Thorer struck with his sword at the dog, and gave him a great wound; but at the same moment the king's spear flew under Thorer's arm, and went through and through him, and came out at his other side. There Thorer left his life; but Vige was carried wounded to the ships.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.—*King Olaf's Voyage to Godey.*

King Olaf gave life and freedom to all the men who asked it and agreed to become Christian. King Olaf sailed with his fleet northwards along the coast, and baptized all the people among whom he came; and when he came north to Salten fiord,† he intended to sail into it to look for Raud, but a dreadful tempest and storm was raging in the fiord. They lay there a whole week, in which the same weather was raging within the fiord, while without there was a fine brisk wind only, fair for proceeding north along the land.

* Hiort signifies the deer or hart.—L.

† The Salten fiord is more celebrated in the north of Norway, and more dreaded, than the famous Maelstrom. It is a large fiord within; but the throat through which the vast mass of water has to run in and out at flood and ebb is so narrow, that it makes a very heavy and dangerous race or roost for many miles out in the sea, especially in ebb, when the whole body of water is returning to the ocean. The stream can only be crossed during a few minutes at still water, when flood or ebb has not begun to run, unless at a great distance from the jaws of this singular gulf. Salten fjord is called by Snorre *Salpti*.—L.

gnawed its way out of his side; and thus Raud perished. King Olaf took here much gold and silver, and other property of weapons, and many sorts of precious effects; and all the men who were with Raud he either had baptized, or if they refused had them killed or tortured. Then the king took the dragon-ship which Raud had owned, and steered it himself; for it was a much larger and handsomer vessel than the Crane. In front it had a dragon's head, and aft a crook, which turned up, and ended with the figure of the dragon's tail. The carved work on each side of the stem and stern was gilded. This ship the king called the Serpent. When the sails were hoisted they represented, as it were, the dragon's wings; and the ship was the handsomest in all Norway. The islands on which Raud dwelt were called Gylling and Haring; but the whole islands together were called Godey Isles, and the current between the isles and the mainland the Godey Stream. King Olaf baptized the whole people of the fiord, and then sailed southwards along the land; and on this voyage happened much and various things, which are set down in tales and sagas,—namely, how witches and evil spirits tormented his men, and sometimes himself; but we will rather write about what occurred when King Olaf made Norway Christian, or in the other countries in which he advanced Christianity. The same autumn Olaf with his fleet returned to Throndhjem, and landed at Nidaros, where he took up his winter abode. What I am now going to write about concerns the Icelanders.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.—*Of the Icelanders.*

Kjartan Olafson,* a son's son of Hoskuld, and a daughter's son of Egil Skallagrimson, came the same autumn [999]† from Iceland to Nidaros, and he was considered to be the most agreeable and hopeful man of any born in Iceland. There was also Haldor,‡ a son of Gudmund of Modruveller; and Kolbein, a son of Thord, Frey's gode, and a brother's son of Brenne-Flose;§ together with Sverting, a son of the gode Runolf.‖ All these were heathens; and besides them there were many more,—some men of power, others common men of no property. There came also from Iceland considerable people, who, by Thangbrand's help, had been made Christians; namely, Gissur the White, a son of Teit Ketilbiornson; and his mother was Alof, daughter of herse Bodvar, who was the son of viking Kare. Bodvar's brother was Sigurd, father of Eirik Biodaskalle, whose daughter Astrid was King Olaf's mother. Hialte Skeggjason was the name of another Iceland man, who was married to Vilborg, Gissur the White's daughter. Hialte was also a Christian; and King Olaf was very friendly to his relations Gissur and Hialte, who

* Kjartan Olafson is one of the chief characters in *Laxdæla Saga*. He was born about the year 980, was abroad from 996 to 1000, and fell April 9, 1002.

† 999 is a mistake made by Snorre. According to *Laxdæla Saga* Kjartan came to Norway in 996.

‡ Haldor fell in the Brian battle Easter 1014.

§ Flose got his surname, Brenne, from his burning the wise Njal in 1011.

‖ The gode Runolf was one of the most valiant defenders of heathendom. He caused the banishment of Hjalte Skeggjason.

lived with him. But the Iceland men who directed the ships, and were heathens, tried to sail away as soon as the king came to the town of Nidaros, for they were told the king forced all men to become Christians; but the wind came stiff against them, and drove them back to Nidarholm. They who directed the ships were Thorarin Nefiulfson, the skald Halfred Ottarson,* Brand the Generous, and Thorleik, Brand's son. It was told the king that there were Icelanders with ships there, and all were heathen, and wanted to fly from a meeting with the king. Then the king sent them a message forbidding them to sail, and ordering them to bring their ships up to the town, which they did, but without discharging the cargoes.† [They carried on their dealings and held a market at the king's pier. In spring they tried three times to slip away, but never succeeded; so they continued lying at the king's pier. It happened one fine day that many set out to swim for amuse-

* Of Halfred Ottarson there is a separate saga. He was born about 970, came to Earl Hakon about 988, and composed a song about him. In 996 he came to Norway and heard for the first time of the death of Hakon, and in the fall he composed his *Olaf's Drapa*, which has been quoted repeatedly in the preceding chapters. After spending the winter 997 with King Olaf he proceeded to Ore Sound, composed a song for Earl Sigvald, visited King Olaf in Sweden, and settled in Gautland, where he married. In 999 he returned to Norway, where, as a penalty for his indifference in regard to Christianity, he was obliged to compose his *Uppreistardrapa* (song of resurrection). In the year 1000 he went to Iceland, and the next year he heard of Olaf's death. He hastened back to Norway, where he composed his *Erfidrapa Olafs* in 1002. He also composed songs for Earl Eirik. He seems to have died shortly before Olaf the Saint ascended the throne.

† The rest of chapter 88 given here is not found in the original text of Snorre, and is omitted in Unger's edition of *Heimskringla*; but as it contains facts of importance in regard to Kjartan's visit to Norway, we retain the translation of it in []. The original is found in *Codex Frisianus*, and a somewhat different version is found in *Laxdœla Saga*.

ment, and among them was a man who distinguished himself above the others in all bodily exercises. Kjartan challenged Halfred Vandredaskald to try himself in swimming against this man, but he declined it. "Then will I make a trial," said Kjartan, casting off his clothes, and springing into the water. Then he set after the man, seizes hold of his foot, and dives with him under water. They come up again, and without speaking a word dive again, and are much longer under water than the first time. They come up again, and without saying a word dive a third time, until Kjartan thought it was time to come up again, which, however, he could in no way accomplish, which showed sufficiently the difference in their strength. They were under water so long that Kjartan was almost drowned. They then came up, and swam to land. This Northman asked what the Icelander's name was. Kjartan tells his name.

He says, "Thou art a good swimmer; but art thou expert also in other exercises?"

Kjartan replied, that such expertness was of no great value.

The Northman asks, "Why dost thou not inquire of me such things as I have asked thee about?"

Kjartan replies, "It is all one to me who thou art, or what thy name is."

"Then will I," says he, "tell thee: I am Olaf Trygveson."

He asked Kjartan much about Iceland, which he answered generally, and wanted to withdraw as hastily as he could; but the king said, "Here is a

cloak which I will give thee, Kjartan." And Kjartan took the cloak with many thanks.]

CHAPTER LXXXIX.—*Of the Baptism of the Icelanders.*

When Michaelmas * came, the king had high mass sung with great splendour. The Icelanders went there, and listened to the fine singing and the sound of the bells; and when they came back to their ships every man told his opinion of the Christian man's worship. Kjartan expressed his pleasure at it, but most of the others scoffed at it; and it went according to the proverb, "the king has many ears," for this was told to the king. He sent immediately that very day a message to Kjartan to come to him. Kjartan went to the king with some men, and the king received him kindly. Kjartan was a very stout and handsome man, and of ready and agreeable speech. After the king and Kjartan had conversed a little, the king asked him to adopt Christianity. Kjartan replies, that he would not say no to that, if he thereby obtained the king's friendship; and as the king promised him the fullest friendship, they were soon agreed. The next day Kjartan was baptized, together with his relation Bolle Thorlakson,† and all their fellow-travellers. Kjartan and Bolle were the king's guests as long as they were

* September 29.

† Bolle Thorlakson (in Munch's translation Thorleikson) was Kjartan's cousin and foster-brother. As Kjartan continues to stay in Norway, Bolle marries his wife Gudrun, and at her instigation he kills Kjartan, 1002. Bolle is himself slain by Kjartan's brothers, 1005. His story is to be found in *Laxdœla Saga*.

in their white baptismal clothes, and the king had much kindness for them. Wherever they came they were looked upon as people of distinction.

CHAPTER XC.—*Halfred the Skald Baptized.*

As King Olaf one day was walking in the street some men met him, and he who went the foremost saluted the king. The king asked the man his name, and he called himself Halfred.

"Art thou the skald?" said the king.

"I can compose poetry," replied he.

"Wilt thou then adopt Christianity, and come into my service?" asked the king.

"If I am baptized," replies he, "it must be on one condition,—that thou thyself art my godfather; for no other will I have."

The king replies, "That I will do." And Halfred was baptized, the king holding him during the baptism.

Afterwards the king said, "Wilt thou enter into my service?"

Halfred replied, "I was formerly in Earl Hakon's court; but now I will neither enter into thine nor into any other service, unless thou promise me it shall never be my lot to be driven away from thee."

"It has been reported to me," said the king, "that thou art neither so prudent nor so obedient as to fulfil my commands."

"In that case," replied Halfred, "put me to death."

"Thou art a skald who composes difficulties," says the king; "but into my service, Halfred, thou shalt be received."

Halfred says, "if I am to be named the composer of difficulties,* what dost thou give me, king, on my name-day?"

The king gave him a sword without a scabbard, and said, "Now compose me a song upon this sword, and let the word sword be in every line of the strophe." Halfred† sang thus:—

"This sword of swords is my reward.
For him who knows to wield a sword,
And with his sword to serve his lord,
Yet wants a sword, his lot is hard.
I would I had my good lord's leave
For this good sword a sheath to choose:
I'm worth three swords when men swords use,
But for the sword-sheath now I grieve."

Then the king gave him the scabbard, observing that the word sword was wanting in one line of his strophe. "But there are three swords at least in two other lines," says Halfred. "So it is," replies the king.‡—Out of Halfred's lays we have taken the

* Vandredaskald—the despair of skalds, or the troublesome poet.—L.

† In regard to Halfred Vandredaskald, see Gudbrand Vigfusson's *Corpus Poeticum*, vol. ii. pp. 87–97.

‡ From this dialogue, which we may fairly take as a true representation of the tone of conversation, and very likely of the words, between a king and a man of literature or skald in the tenth century, it may be inferred that there was a considerable taste for the compositions of skalds, and for intellectual effort; but that this taste was gratified by the art of verse-making—by the reproduction of words, letters, metres, in difficult technical circumstances—much more than by the spirit of poetry. It is likely that in all ages, and even among individuals, the taste for the simple and natural in poetry is the last, not the first, developed taste. It is the savage who loves frippery in dress, and in what addresses itself to taste.—L.

most of the true and faithful accounts that are here related about Olaf Trygveson.

CHAPTER XCI.—*Thangbrand the Priest returns from Iceland.*

The same harvest [999] Thangbrand the priest came back from Iceland to King Olaf, and told the ill success of his journey; namely, that the Icelanders had made lampoons about him; and that some even sought to kill him, and there was little hope of that country ever being made Christian. King Olaf was so enraged at this, that he ordered all the Icelanders to be assembled by sound of horn, and was going to kill all who were in the town; but Kjartan, Gissur, and Hialte, with the other Icelanders who had become Christians, went to him, and said, "King, thou must not fall from thy word,—that however much any man may irritate thee, thou wilt forgive him if he turn from heathenism and become Christian. All the Icelanders here are willing to be baptized; and through them we may find means to bring Christianity into Iceland: for there are many amongst them, sons of considerable people in Iceland, whose friends can advance the cause; but the priest Thangbrand proceeded there as he did here in the court, with violence and manslaughter, and such conduct the people there would not submit to." The king hearkened to those remonstrances; and all the Iceland men who were there were baptized.

Chapter XCII.—*Of King Olaf's Feats.*

King Olaf was more expert in all exercises than any man in Norway whose memory is preserved to us in sagas; and he was stronger and more agile than most men, and many stories are written down about it. One is, that he ascended the Smalsarhorn,* and fixed his shield upon the very peak. Another is, that one of his followers had climbed up the peak after him, until he came to where he could neither get up nor down; but the king came to his help, climbed up to him, took him under his arm, and bore him to the flat ground. King Olaf could run across the oars outside of the vessel while his men were rowing the Serpent. He could play with three daggers, so that one was always in the air, and he took the one falling by the handle. He could walk all round upon the ship's rails, could strike and cut equally well with both hands, and could cast two spears at once. King Olaf was a very merry frolicsome man; gay and social; was very violent in all respects; was very generous; was very finical in his dress, but in battle he exceeded all in bravery. He was distinguished for cruelty when he was enraged, and tortured many of his enemies. Some he burnt in fire; some he had torn in pieces by mad dogs; some he had mutilated, or cast down from high precipices. On this account his friends were attached to him warmly, and his enemies feared him greatly; and

* Now called Hornelen,—an inaccessible peak or needle on the summit of a mountain in Bremanger.—L.

thus he made such a fortunate advance in his undertakings, for some obeyed his will out of the friendliest zeal, and others out of dread.

CHAPTER XCIII.—*Of the Baptism of Leif Eirikson.*

Leif, a son of Eirik the Red, who first settled in Greenland, came this summer [999] from Greenland to Norway; and as he met King Olaf he adopted Christianity, and passed the winter [1000] with the king.

CHAPTER XCIV.—*Fall of Gudrod, the last of Eirik's and Gunhild's Sons.*

Gudrod, a son of Eirik Bloodaxe and Gunhild the Mother of Kings, had been ravaging in the western countries ever since he fled from Norway before the Earl Hakon. But the summer before mentioned [999], when King Olaf Trygveson had ruled four years over Norway, Gudrod came to the country, and had many ships of war with him. He had sailed from England; and when he thought himself near to the Norway coast, he steered south along the land, to the quarter where it was least likely King Olaf would be. Gudrod sailed in this way south to Viken; and as soon as he came to the land he began to plunder, to subject the people to him, and to demand that they should accept of him as king. Now as the country people saw that a great army was come upon them, they desired peace and terms. They offered King Gudrod to send a Thing-message

over all the country, and to accept of him at the Thing as king, rather than suffer from his army; but they desired delay until a fixed day, while the token of the Thing's assembling was going round through the land. The king demanded maintenance during the time this delay lasted. The bondes preferred entertaining the king as a guest, by turns, as long as he required it; and the king accepted of the proposal to go about with some of his men as a guest from place to place in the land, while others of his men remained to guard the ships. When King Olaf's relations, Hyrning and Thorgeir, heard of this, they gathered men, fitted out ships, and went northwards to Viken. They came in the night with their men to a place at which King Gudrod was living as a guest, and attacked him with fire and weapons; and there King Gudrod fell, and most of his followers. Of those who were with his ships some were killed, some slipped away and fled to great distances; and now were all the sons of Eirik and Gunhild dead.

CHAPTER XCV.—*The Building of the Ship Long Serpent.*

The winter after [1000] King Olaf came from Halogaland, he had a great vessel built at Ladehammer,* which was larger than any ship in the country, and of which the beam-knees are still to be seen. The length of keel that rested upon the grass

* Hlaðhamrar (now called Ladehammer),—the knob or point of land below the house of Lade, still known by the same name. Lade is close to Throndhjem.—L.

was seventy-four ells. Thorberg Skafhog was the man's name who was the master-builder of the ship; but there were many others besides,—some to fell wood, some to shape it, some to make nails, some to carry timber;* and all that was used was of the best. The ship was both long and broad and high-sided, and strongly timbered. While they were planking the ship, it happened that Thorberg had to go home to his farm upon some urgent business; and as he remained there a long time, the ship was planked up on both sides when he came back. In the evening the king went out, and Thorberg with him, to see how the vessel looked, and everybody said that never was seen so large and so beautiful a ship of war. Then the king returned to the town. Early next morning the king returns again to the ship, and Thorberg with him. The carpenters were there before them, but all were standing idle with their arms across. The king asked "what was the matter?" They said the ship was destroyed; for somebody had gone from stem to stern, and cut one deep notch after the other down the one side of the planking. When the king came nearer he saw it was so, and said, with an oath, "The man shall die who has thus destroyed the vessel out of envy, if he can be discovered, and I shall bestow a great reward on whoever finds him out."

* This division of labour and trades, and this building of a vessel equal in length to a frigate of forty guns, give a curious peep at the civilisation of these pagans in the tenth century, and of the state of the useful arts among them. We need not be surprised that a people who had master-carpenters among them had skalds—the useful and the fine arts keep some kind of pace together.—L.

"I can tell you, king," says Thorberg, "who has done this piece of work."

"I don't think," replies the king, "that any one is so likely to find it out as thou art."

Thorberg says, "I will tell you, king, who did it. I did it myself."

The king says, "Thou must restore it all to the same condition as before, or thy life shall pay for it."

Then Thorberg went and chipped the planks until the deep notches were all smoothed and made even with the rest; and the king and all present declared that the ship was much handsomer on the side of the hull which Thorberg had chipped, and bade him shape the other side in the same way, and gave him great thanks for the improvement. Afterwards Thorberg was the master-builder of the ship until she was entirely finished. The ship was a dragon, built after the one the king had captured in Halogaland; but this ship was far larger, and more carefully put together in all her parts. The king called this ship Serpent the Long, and the other Serpent the Short. The long Serpent had thirty-four benches for rowers. The head and the arched tail were both gilt, and the bulwarks were as high as in sea-going ships. This ship was the best and most costly ship ever made in Norway.*

* The chronology is as follows. Earl Eirik takes flight in the autumn 995, spends the winter 996 with King Olaf in Sweden. During the summer he makes depredations on Gotland and in Vindland. The winter 997 he is again in Svithiod. The following winters, 998 and 999, he was either in Svithiod or in Denmark. In the five summers are included the year 1000, when Earl Eirik takes an active part in the death of Olaf Trygveson.

CHAPTER XCVI.—*Of Earl Eirik, the Son of Hakon.*

Earl Eirik, the son of Earl Hakon, and his brother, with many other valiant men their relations, had left the country after Earl Hakon's fall. Earl Eirik went eastwards to Svithiod, to Olaf, the Swedish king, and he and his people were well received. King Olaf gave the earl peace and freedom in the land, and great fiefs; so that he could support himself and his men well. Thord Kolbeinson speaks of this in the verses before given.* Many people who fled from the country on account of King Olaf Trygveson came out of Norway to Earl Eirik; and the earl resolved to fit out ships and go a-cruising, in order to get property for himself and his people. First he steered to Gotland, and lay there long in summer watching for merchant vessels sailing towards the land, or for vikings. Sometimes he landed and ravaged all round upon the sea-coasts. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa:"—

> "Eirik, as we have lately heard,
> Has waked the song of shield and sword,—
> Has waked the slumbering storm of shields
> Upon the vikings' water-fields:
> From Gotland's lonely shore has gone
> Far up the land, and battles won;
> And o'er the sea his name is spread.
> To friends a shield, to foes a dread."

Afterwards Earl Eirik sailed south to Vindland, and at Staurrin found some viking ships, and gave

* In the verses given in chapter 57 of this saga.—L.

them battle. Eirik gained the victory, and slew the vikings. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa:"—

"Earl Eirik, he who stoutly wields
The battle-axe in storm of shields,
With his long ships surprised the foe
At Staurrin, and their strength laid low.
Many a corpse floats round the shore;
The strand with dead is studded o'er;
The raven tears their sea-bleached skins—
The land thrives well when Eirik wins."

CHAPTER XCVII.—*Earl Eirik's Foray on the Baltic Coasts.*

Earl Eirik sailed back to Sweden in autumn, and stayed there all winter [997]; but in spring he fitted out his war force again, and sailed up the Baltic. When he came to Valdemar's dominions he began to plunder and kill the inhabitants, and burn the dwellings everywhere as he came along, and to lay waste the country. He came to Aldeigiuborg,* and besieged it until he took the castle; and he killed many people, broke down and burned the castle, and then carried destruction all around far and wide in Russia. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa:"—

"The generous earl, brave and bold,
Who scatters his bright shining gold,
Eirik, with fire-scattering hand,
Wasted the Russian monarch's land,—
With arrow-shower, and storm of war,
Wasted the land of Valdemar.
Aldeiga burns, and Eirik's might
Scours through all Russia by its light."

Earl Eirik was five years in all on this foray; and when he returned from Russia he ravaged all Adal-

* Aldeigiuborg is the town at Aldeiga or the Ladoga lake, and is supposed to be the present town of Notaburg, on an island in this lake.—L.

syssel and Eysyssel,* and took there four viking ships from the Danes, and killed every man on board. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa:—

"Among the isles flies round the word,
That Eirik's blood-devouring sword
Has flashed like fire in the Sound,
And wasted all the land around.
And Eirik too, the bold in fight,
Has broken down the robber-might
Of four great vikings, and has slain
All of the crew—nor spared one Dane.
In Gautland he has seized the town,
In Syssels harried up and down;
And all the people in dismay
Fled to the forests far away.
By land or sea, in field or wave,
What can withstand this earl brave?
All fly before his fiery hand—
God save the earl, and keep the land."

When Eirik had been a year in Sweden he went over to Denmark [996] to King Svein the Forked-bearded, the Danish king, and courted his daughter Gyda. The proposal was accepted, and Earl Eirik married Gyda; and a year after [997] they had a son, who was called Hakon. Earl Eirik was in the winter in Denmark, or sometimes in Sweden; but in summer he went a-cruising.

CHAPTER XCVIII.—*King Svein's Marriage.*

The Danish king, Svein Forked Beard,† was married to Gunhild, a daughter of Burisleif, king

* Eistland was the country along the Gulf of Finland, as far west as the Vistula; and Eysyssel was the district of the islands of Osel and others along this coast. Adalsyssel was the district on the main land opposite to Eysyssel.—L.

† Svein or Svend Forked Beard (Tiuguskegg) was the conqueror of England, and father of Canute the Great. We retain the word

of the Vinds. But in the times we have just been speaking of it happened that Queen Gunhild fell sick, and died. Soon after King Svein married Sigrid the Haughty, a daughter of Skoglar Toste, and mother of the Swedish king Olaf; and by means of this relationship there was great friendship between the kings and Earl Eirik, Hakon's son.

CHAPTER XCIX.—*King Burisleif's Marriage.*

Burisleif, the king of the Vinds, complained to his relation Earl Sigvalde, that the agreement was broken which Sigvalde had made between King Svein and King Burisleif, by which Burisleif was to get in marriage Thyre, Harald's daughter, a sister of King Svein: but that marriage had not

svein in swain, boatswain, coxswain, and other words, in the same signification as svein and svend have in the northern languages. He was the son of King Harald Gormson, whose father, Gorm the Old, was the first sole king of Denmark. Gorm the Old, Harald Harfager, and Eirik Eymundson of Sweden, were contemporaries, and three remarkable men, who, about the middle of the ninth century, got the supreme power in their respective dominions, and put down the small kings. Eirik the Victorious, a grandson of Eirik Eymundson, gained a battle at Fyrisvols, near Upsala, in 983, against his brother's son, Styrbiorn the Strong, who was aided by Harald Gormson of Denmark; and in the war which ensued between Sweden and Denmark, Svein, Harald's son, was driven from his kingdom. Eirik's first wife was Sigrid the Haughty. He divorced her after she had a son by him called Olaf. This Olaf, called Olaf the Swede, and the Lap-king, from having been king while still in his nurse's lap, was the Olaf of whom so much is related in the Saga of Saint Olaf. This Sigrid, the same who burnt Harald Grenske, and whom Olaf Trygveson insulted by striking her with his glove, married Svein, who recovered back his kingdom by this marriage from his stepson, Olaf the Swede. According to the saga, this Sigrid's desire of revenge for the insult she had received from Olaf Trygveson occasioned the combination which defeated and slew Olaf. The peace, established by this marriage between Sweden and Denmark, enabled Svein to leave his dominions and make war in England. Olaf the Swede died in 1024, and was the first Christian king of Sweden.—L.

proceeded, for Thyre had given a positive no to the proposal to marry her to an old and heathen king. "Now," said King Burisleif to Earl Sigvalde, "I must have the promise fulfilled." And he told Earl Sigvalde to go to Denmark, and bring him Thyre as his queen. Earl Sigvalde loses no time, but goes to King Svein of Denmark; explains to him the case; and brings it so far by his persuasion, that the king delivered his sister Thyre into his hands. With her went some female attendants, and her foster-father, by name Osur Agason, a man of great power, and some other people. In the agreement between the king and the earl, it was settled that Thyre should have in property the possessions which Queen Gunhild had enjoyed in Vindland, besides other great properties as bride-gifts. Thyre wept sorely, and went very unwillingly. When the earl came to Vindland, Burisleif held his wedding with Queen Thyre, and received her in marriage; but as long as she was among heathens she would neither eat nor drink with them, and this lasted for seven days.

CHAPTER C.—*King Olaf gets Thyre in Marriage.*

It happened one night that Queen Thyre and Osur ran away in the dark, and into the woods, and, to be short in our story, came at last to Denmark. But there Thyre did not dare to remain, knowing that if her brother King Svein heard of her, he would send her back directly to Vindland. She went on, therefore, secretly to Norway, and never

stayed her journey until she fell in with King Olaf, by whom she was kindly received. Thyre related to the king her sorrows, and entreated his advice in her need, and protection in his kingdom. Thyre was a well-spoken woman, and the king had pleasure in her conversation. He saw she was a handsome woman,* and it came into his mind that she would be a good match; so he turns the conversation that way, and asks if she will marry him. Now, as she saw that her situation was such that she could not help herself, and considered what a luck it was for her to marry so celebrated a man, she bade him to dispose himself of her hand and fate; and, after nearer conversation, King Olaf took Thyre in marriage. This wedding was held in harvest [999], after the king returned from Halogaland; and King Olaf and Queen Thyre remained all winter [1000] at Nidaros. The following spring Queen Thyre complained often to King Olaf, and wept bitterly over it, that she who had so great property in Vindland had no goods or possessions here in the country that were suitable for a queen; and sometimes she would entreat the king with fine words to get her property restored to her, and saying that King Burisleif was so great a friend of King Olaf that he would not deny King Olaf anything if they were to meet. But when King Olaf's friends heard of such speeches, they dissuaded him from any such expedition. It is related that the king one day early in spring was

* Thyre cannot have been very young at this time, as she was the widow of Styrbjorn, who fell 988.

walking in the street, and met a man in the market with many, and, for that early season, remarkably large angelica roots. The king took a great stalk of the angelica in his hand, and went home to Queen Thyre's lodging. Thyre sat in her room weeping as the king came in. The king said, "See here, queen, is a great angelica stalk, which I give thee." She threw it away, and said, "A greater present Harald Gormson gave to my mother; and he was not afraid to go out of the land and take his own. That was shown when he came here to Norway, and laid waste the greater part of the land, and seized on all the scat and revenues; and thou darest not go across the Danish dominions for this brother of mine, King Svein." As she spoke thus, King Olaf sprang up, and answered with a loud oath, "Never did I fear thy brother King Svein; and if we meet he shall give way before me!"

CHAPTER CI.—*Olaf's Levy for War.*

Soon after the king convoked a Thing in the town, and proclaimed to all the public, that in summer he would go abroad upon an expedition out of the country, and would raise both ships and men from every district; and at the same time fixed how many ships he would have from the whole Throndhjem fiord. Then he sent his message-token south and north, both along the sea-coast and up in the interior of the country, to let an army be gathered. The king ordered the Long Serpent to be put into the

water, along with all his other ships both small and great. He himself steered the Long Serpent. When the crews were taken out for the ships, they were so carefully selected that no man on board the Long Serpent was older than sixty or younger than twenty years, and all were men distinguished for strength and courage. Those who were Olaf's body-guard were in particular chosen men, both of the natives and of foreigners,* and the boldest and strongest.

CHAPTER CII.—*The Crew on board of the Long Serpent.*

Ulf the Red was the name of the man who bore King Olaf's banner, and was in the forecastle of the Long Serpent; and with him was Kolbiorn the marshal, Thorstein Uxafot, and Vikar of Tiunda-land, and the brother of Arnliot Gelline.† By the bulkhead next the forecastle were Vak Raumason from Alfheim, Berse the Strong, An Skyte from Jamtaland, Thrand the Strong from Thelemark, and his brother Uthyrmer. Besides these were, of Halogaland men, Thrand Skialge and Ogmund Sande, Hlodver Lange from Saltvik, and Harek Hvasse; together with these Throndhjem men—Ketil the High, Thorfin Eisle, Havard and his brothers from Orkadal. The following were in the fore-hold; Biorn from Studla, Bork from the fiords, Thorgrim Thiodolfson from Hvin, Asbiorn and Orm,

* Foreigners were kept in pay even at that time in the body-guard of the kings.—L.

† Of Arnliot Gelline see Saint Olaf's Saga, chapter 151.

Thord from Njardarlog, Thorstein the White from Oprustad, Arnor from More, Halstein and Hauk from the Fiord-district, Eyvind Snak, Bergthor Bestil, Halkel from Fialer, Olaf Dreng, Arnfin from Sogn, Sigurd Bild, Einar from Hordaland, and Fin and Ketil from Rogaland, and Griotgard the Brisk. The following were in the hold next the mast: Einar Tambaskelfer,* who was not reckoned as fully experienced, being only eighteen years old; Thorstein Hlifarson, Thorolf, Ivar Smetta, and Orm Skogarnef. Many other valiant men were in the Serpent, although we cannot tell all their names. In every half division of the hold were eight men, and each and all chosen men; and in the fore-hold were thirty men. It was a common saying among people, that the Long Serpent's crew was as distinguished for bravery, strength, and daring, among other men, as the Long Serpent was distinguished among other ships. Thorkel Nefia, the king's brother, commanded the Short Serpent; and Thorkel Dydril and Jostein, the king's mother's brothers, had the Crane; and both these ships were well manned. King Olaf had eleven large ships from Throndhjem, besides vessels with twenty rowers' benches, smaller vessels, and provision-vessels.

CHAPTER CIII.—*Iceland Baptized.*

When King Olaf had nearly rigged out his fleet in Nidaros, he appointed men over the Throndhjem

* He had a bow by name Tamb, which he was wont to make quake (skjilva).

country in all districts and communities. He also sent to Iceland Gissur the White and Hialte Skeggiason, to proclaim Christianity there; and sent with them a priest called Thormod, along with several men in holy orders. But he retained with him, as hostages, four Icelanders whom he thought the most important; namely, Kjartan Olafson, Haldor Gudmundson, Kolbein Thordson, and Sverting Runolfson. Of Gissur and Hialte's progress, it is related that they came to Iceland before the All-thing, and went to the Thing; and in that Thing Christianity was introduced by law into Iceland, and in the course of the summer all the people were baptized [1000].

CHAPTER CIV.—*Greenland Baptized.*

The same spring King Olaf also sent Leif Eirikson [1000] to Greenland to proclaim Christianity there, and Leif went there that summer. In the ocean he took up the crew of a ship which had been lost, and who were clinging to the wreck. He also found Vinland the Good; arrived about harvest in Greenland; and had with him for it a priest and other teachers, with whom he went to Brattahlid to lodge with his father Eirik. People called him afterwards Leif the Lucky: but his father Eirik said that his luck and ill luck balanced each other; for if Leif had saved a wreck in the ocean, he had brought a hurtful person with him to Greenland, and that was the priest.

CHAPTER CV.—*Earl Ragnvald sends Messengers to King Olaf.**

[The winter after King Olaf had baptized Halogaland, he and Queen Thyre were in Nidaros; and the summer before Queen Thyre had brought King Olaf a boy-child, which was both stout and promising, and was called Harald, after its mother's father. The king and queen loved the infant exceedingly, and rejoiced in the hope that it would grow up and inherit after its father; but it lived barely a year after its birth, which both took much to heart. In that winter were many Icelanders and other clever men in King Olaf's house, as before related. His sister Ingibjorg, Trygve's daughter, King Olaf's sister, was also at the court at that time. She was beautiful in appearance, modest and frank with the people, had a steady manly judgment, and was beloved of all. She was very fond of the Icelanders

* There are eight chapters here in Peringskiold's edition of the *Heimskringla* which relate to the discovery of Vinland, and are taken from the *Codex Flateyensis*, but are not in the manuscripts of the *Heimskringla* known to the Danish antiquaries. They are supposed to have been an interpolation in the manuscript which Peringskiold had before him, but which is not now to be found. That they are an interpolation is manifest, because they have no reference to or connection with the events or personages before them or after them in Snorre's narrative, and interrupt Olaf Trygveson's history at the most interesting and important period; but all Snorre's incidents and personages in his episodes reappear and conduce to his story, as in real life, or as in Homer's practice or Horace's precepts of the construction of an epic. This artistical management of his tale is one of the beauties of Snorre's work, and of the internal evidences of its general truth, which will not have escaped the reader's notice.—L.

The present editor has thought best to follow the example of Hildebrand and others, and publish the eight chapters at the end of Olaf Trygveson's Saga, where the reader may find them. Samuel Laing printed them in an Appendix to Vol. III. See note to chapter 107.

who were there, but most of Kjartan Olafson, for he had been longer than the others in the king's house; and he found it always amusing to converse with her, for she had both understanding and cleverness in talk. The king was always gay and full of mirth in his intercourse with the people; and often asked about the manners of the great men and chiefs in the neighbouring countries, when strangers from Denmark or Sweden came to see him. The summer before Halfred Vandredaskald had come from Gautland, where he had been with Earl Ragnvald, Ulf's son, who had lately come to the government of West Gautland. Ulf, Ragnvald's father, was a brother of Sigrid the Haughty; so that King Olaf the Swede and Earl Ragnvald were brother and sister's children. Halfred told Olaf many things about the earl: he said he was an able chief, excellently fitted for governing, generous with money, brave, and steady in friendship. Halfred said also that the earl desired much the friendship of King Olaf, and had spoken of making court to Ingibjorg, Trygve's daughter. The same winter came ambassadors from Gautland, and fell in with King Olaf in the north, in Nidaros, and brought the message which Halfred had spoken of,—that the earl desired to be King Olaf's entire friend, and wished to become his brother-in-law by obtaining his sister Ingibjorg in marriage. Therewith the ambassadors laid before the king sufficient tokens in proof that in reality they came from the earl on this errand. The king listened with approbation to their speech; but said

that Ingibjorg herself must determine on his assent to the marriage. The king then talked to his sister about the matter, and asked her opinion about it. She answered to this effect,—"I have been with you for some time, and you have shown brotherly care and tender respect for me ever since you came to the country. I will agree therefore to your proposal about my marriage, provided that you do not marry me to a heathen man." The king said it should be as she wished. The king then spoke to the ambassadors; and it was settled before they departed that in summer Earl Ragnvald should meet the king in the east parts of the country, to enter into the fullest friendship with each other, and when they met they would settle about the marriage. With this reply the earl's messengers went westward, and King Olaf remained all winter in Nidaros in great splendour, and with many people about him.]

CHAPTER CVI.—*King Olaf begins his Expedition to Vindland.*

King Olaf proceeded in summer with his ships and men southwards along the land [and past Stad. With him were Queen Thyre and Ingibjorg, Trygve's daughter, the king's sister]. Many of his friends also joined him, and other persons of consequence who had prepared themselves to travel with the king. The first man among these was his brother-in-law, Erling Skialgson, who had with him a large ship of thirty benches of rowers, and which was in every

respect well equipt. His brothers-in-law Hyrning and Thorgeir also joined him, each of whom for himself steered a large vessel; and many other powerful men besides followed him. [With all this war-force he sailed southwards along the land; but when he came south as far as Rogaland he stopped there, for Erling Skialgson had prepared for him a splendid feast at Sole. There Earl Ragnvald, Ulf's son, from Gautland, came to meet the king, and to settle the business which had been proposed in winter in the messages between them, namely, the marriage with Ingibjorg the king's sister. Olaf received him kindly; and when the matter came to be spoken of, the king said he would keep his word, and marry his sister Ingibjorg to him, provided he would accept the true faith, and make all his subjects he ruled over in his land be baptized. The earl agreed to this, and he and all his followers were baptized. Now was the feast enlarged that Erling had prepared, for the earl held his wedding there with Ingibjorg the king's sister. King Olaf had now married off all his sisters. The earl, with Ingibjorg, set out on his way home; and the king sent learned men with him to baptize the people in Gautland, and to teach them the right faith and morals. The king and the earl parted in the greatest friendship.]

CHAPTER CVII.—*King Olaf's Expedition to Vindland.*

[After his sister Ingibjorg's wedding, the king made ready in all haste to leave the country with his

army, which was both great and made up of fine men.]* When he left the land and sailed southwards he had sixty ships of war, with which he sailed past Denmark, and in through the Sound, and on to Vindland. He appointed a meeting with King Burisleif; and when the kings met, they spoke about the property which King Olaf demanded, and the conference went off peaceably, as a good account was given of the properties which King Olaf thought himself entitled to there. He passed here much of the summer, and found many of his old friends.

CHAPTER CVIII.—*Conspiracy of the Kings of Sweden and Denmark and Earl Eirik against King Olaf.*

The Danish king, Svein Forked Beard, was married, as before related, to Sigrid the Haughty. Sigrid was King Olaf Trygveson's greatest enemy; the cause of which, as before said, was that King Olaf had broken off with her, and had struck her in the face. She urged King Svein much to give battle to King Olaf Trygveson; saying that he had reason enough, as Olaf had married his sister Thyre without his leave, "and that your predecessors would not

* All of chapter 105 and the parts of chapters 106 and 107 enclosed in brackets, thus [], are taken from *Flateybok*, and do not belong to the original manuscript of Snorre's *Heimskringla*. C. R. Unger omits altogether the interpolation in chapter 88, the eight chapters concerning Vinland, and the additions here enclosed in brackets. Hildebrand prints all these interpolations as an appendix to the saga. The present editor publishes the eight chapters on Vinland at the end of the saga, but the other additions, which do not interrupt the narrative, he has thought best to leave where they are given by P. A. Munch, Jacob Aal, and in fact by the majority of the *Heimskringla* editors and translators. He thinks it sufficient to point out that they do not belong to Snorre's work.

have submitted to." Such persuasions Sigrid had often in her mouth; and at last she brought it so far that Svein resolved firmly on doing so. Early in spring King Svein sent messengers eastward into Svithiod, to his brother-in-law Olaf, the Swedish king, and to Earl Eirik; and informed them that King Olaf of Norway was levying men for an expedition, and intended in summer to go to Vindland. To this news the Danish king added an invitation to the Swedish king and Earl Eirik to meet King Svein with an army, so that all together they might make an attack on King Olaf Trygveson. The Swedish king and Earl Eirik were ready enough for this, and immediately assembled a great fleet and an army through all Svithiod, with which they sailed southwards to Denmark, and arrived there after King Olaf Trygveson had sailed to the eastward. Haldor the Unchristian tells of this in his lay on Earl Eirik :—

"The king-subduer raised a host
Of warriors on the Swedish coast.
The brave went southwards to the fight,
Who love the sword-storm's gleaming light;
The brave, who fill the wild wolf's mouth,
Followed bold Eirik to the south;
The brave, who sport in blood—each one
With the bold earl to sea is gone."

The Swedish king and Earl Eirik sailed to meet the Danish king, and they had all, when together, an immense force.

CHAPTER CIX.—*Earl Sigvalde's treacherous Plans.*

At the same time that King Svein sent a message to Svithiod for an army, he sent Earl Sigvalde to

Vindland to spy out King Olaf Trygveson's proceedings, and to bring it about by cunning devices that King Svein and King Olaf should fall in with each other. So Sigvalde sets out to go to Vindland. First, he came to Jomsborg, and then he sought out King Olaf Trygveson. There was much friendship in their conversation, and the earl got himself into great favour with the king. Astrid, the Earl's wife, King Burisleif's daughter, was a great friend of King Olaf Trygveson, particularly on account of the connection which had been between them when Olaf was married to her sister Geira. Earl Sigvalde was a prudent, ready-minded man; and as he had got a voice in King Olaf's council, he put him off much from sailing homewards, finding various reasons for delay. Olaf's people were in the highest degree dissatisfied with this; for the men were anxious to get home, and they lay ready to sail, waiting only for a wind. At last Earl Sigvalde got a secret message from Denmark that the Swedish king's army was arrived from the east, and that Earl Eirik's also was ready; and that all these chiefs had resolved to sail eastwards to Vindland, and wait for King Olaf at an island which is called Svold.* They also desired the earl to contrive matters so that they should meet King Olaf there.

* This island has been somewhere between the south-east end of the Isle of Rugen and the continent; but no such isle now exists, and the antiquary is forced to conjecture it may have been lost in the fourteenth century, when many changes took place in the coast land of the Baltic.—L.

CHAPTER CX.—*King Olaf's Voyage from Vindland.*

There came first a flying report to Vindland that the Danish king, Svein, had fitted out an army; and it was soon whispered that he intended to attack King Olaf. But Earl Sigvalde says to King Olaf, "It never can be King Svein's intention to venture with the Danish force alone, to give battle to thee with such a powerful army; but if thou hast any suspicion that evil is on foot, I will follow thee with my force (at that time it was considered a great matter to have Jomsborg vikings with an army), and I will give thee eleven well-manned ships." The king accepted this offer; and as the light breeze of wind that came was favourable, he ordered the ships to get under weigh, and the war-horns to sound the departure. The sails were hoisted; and all the small vessels, sailing fastest, got out to sea before the others. The earl, who sailed nearest to the king's ship, called to those on board to tell the king to sail in his keel-track: "For I know where the water is deepest between the islands and in the sounds, and these large ships require the deepest." Then the earl sailed first with his eleven ships, and the king followed with his large ships, also eleven in number; but the whole of the rest of the fleet sailed out to sea. Now when Earl Sigvalde came sailing close under the island Svold, a skiff rowed out to inform the earl that the Danish king's army was lying in the harbour before them. Then the earl

ordered the sails of his vessels to be struck, and they rowed in under the island. Haldor the Unchristian says:—

"From out the south bold Trygve's son
With one-and-seventy ships came on,
To dye his sword in bloody fight,
Against the Danish foeman's might.
But the false earl the king betrayed;
And treacherous Sigvalde, it is said,
Deserted from King Olaf's fleet,
And basely fled, the Danes to meet."

It is said here that King Olaf and Earl Sigvalde had seventy sail of vessels and one more, when they sailed from the south.

CHAPTER CXI.—*The Consultation of the Kings.*

The Danish King Svein, the Swedish king Olaf, and Earl Eirik, were there with all their forces [1000]. The weather being fine and clear sunshine, all these chiefs, with a great suite, went out on the isle to see the vessels sailing out at sea, and many of them crowded together; and they saw among them one large and glancing ship. The two kings said, "That is a large and very beautiful vessel: that will be the Long Serpent."

Earl Eirik replied, "That is not the Long Serpent." And he was right; for it was a ship belonging to Eindride of Gimsar.

Soon after they saw another vessel coming sailing along much larger than the first; then says King Svein, "Olaf Trygveson must be afraid, for he does

not venture to sail with the figure-head of the dragon upon his ship."

Says Earl Eirik, "That is not the king's ship yet; for I know that ship by the coloured stripes of cloth in her sail. That is Erling Skialgson's. Let him sail; for it is the better for us that this ship is away from Olaf's fleet, so well equipt as she is."

Soon after they saw and knew Earl Sigvalde's ships, which turned in and laid themselves under the island. Then they saw three ships coming along under sail, and one of them very large. King Svein ordered his men to go to their ships, "for there comes the Long Serpent."

Earl Eirik says, "Many other great and stately vessels have they besides the Long Serpent. Let us wait a little."

Then said many, "Earl Eirik will not fight and avenge his father; and it is a great shame that it should be told that we lay here with so great a force, and allowed King Olaf to sail out to sea before our eyes."

But when they had spoken thus for a short time, they saw four ships coming sailing along, of which one had a large dragon-head richly gilt. Then King Svein stood up, and said, "That dragon shall carry me this evening high, for I shall steer it."

Then said many, "The Long Serpent is indeed a wonderfully large and beautiful vessel, and it shows a great mind to have built such a ship."

Earl Eirik said so loud that several persons heard him, "If King Olaf had no other vessels but only

that one, King Svein would never take it from him with the Danish force alone."

Thereafter all the people rushed on board their ships, took down the tents,* and in all haste made ready for battle.

While the chiefs were speaking among themselves as above related, they saw three very large ships coming sailing along, and at last after them a fourth, and that was the Long Serpent. Of the large ships which had gone before, and which they had taken for the Long Serpent, the first was the Crane; the one after that was the Short Serpent; and when they really saw the Long Serpent, all knew, and nobody had a word to say against it, that it must be Olaf Trygveson who was sailing in such a vessel; and they went to their ships to arm for the fight.

An agreement had been concluded among the chiefs, King Svein, King Olaf the Swede, and Earl Eirik, that they should divide Norway among them in three parts, in case they succeeded against Olaf Trygveson; but that he of the chiefs who should first board the Serpent should have her, and all the booty found in her, and each should have the ships he cleared for himself. Earl Eirik had a large ship of war which he used upon his viking expeditions; and there was an iron beard or comb above on both sides of the stem, and below it a thick iron plate as broad as the combs, which went down quite to the gunnel.†

* The ship-tents or tilts, under which the crews appear to have lived when not under sail.—L.

† It seems to have been an iron plate with spikes on the top, all round the stem and sides of the ship, to prevent boarding.—L.

CHAPTER CXII.—*Of King Olaf's People.*

When Earl Sigvalde with his vessels rowed in under the island, Thorkel Dydril of the Crane, and the other ship commanders who sailed with him, saw that he turned his ships towards the isle, and thereupon let fall the sails, and rowed after him, calling out, and asking why he sailed that way. The Earl answered, that he was waiting for King Olaf, as he feared there were enemies in the way. They lay upon their oars until Thorkel Nefia came up with the Short Serpent and the three ships which followed him. When they told them the same they too struck sail, and let the ships drive, waiting for King Olaf. But when the king sailed in towards the isle, the whole enemies' fleet came rowing within them out to the Sound. When they saw this they begged the king to hold on his way, and not risk battle with so great a force. The king replied, high on the quarter-deck where he stood, "Strike the sails; never shall men of mine think of flight. I never fled from battle. Let God dispose of my life, but flight I shall never take." It was done as the king commanded. Halfred tells of it thus:—

> "And far and wide the saying bold
> Of the brave warrior shall be told.
> The king, in many a fray well tried,
> To his brave champions round him cried,
> 'My men shall never learn from me
> From the dark weapon-cloud to flee.'
> Nor were the brave words spoken then
> Forgotten by his faithful men."

CHAPTER CXIII.—*King Olaf's Ships are closed up for Battle.*

King Olaf ordered the war-horns to sound for all his ships to close up to each other. The king's ship lay in the middle of the line, and on one side lay the Little Serpent, and on the other the Crane; and as they made fast the stems together,* the Long Serpent's stem and the short Serpent's were made fast together; but when the king saw it he called out to his men, and ordered them to lay the larger ship more in advance, so that its stern should not lie so far behind in the fleet.

Then says Ulf the Red, "If the Long Serpent is to lie as much more ahead of the other ships as she is longer than them, we shall have hard work of it here on the forecastle."

The king replies, "I did not think I had a forecastle man afraid as well as red." †

Says Ulf, "Defend thou the quarterdeck as I shall the forecastle."

The king had a bow in his hands, and laid an arrow on the string, and aimed at Ulf.

* The mode of fighting in sea battles appears, from this and many other descriptions, to have been for each party to bind together the stems and sterns of their own ships, forming them thus into a compact body as soon as the fleets came within fighting distance, or within spears' throw. They appear to have fought principally from the forecastles; and to have used grappling-irons for dragging a vessel out of the line, or within boarding distance.—L.

† There is a rhyme or pun here—Raudan oc Ragan. Afraid—Ragan, is similar in alliterative rhyme to Raudan—Red, the name of Ulf; and Raudan oc Ragan make a line of alliterative verse.—L.

Ulf said, "Shoot another way, king, where it is more needful: my work is thy gain."

Chapter CXIV.—*Of King Olaf.*

King Olaf stood on the Serpent's quarterdeck, high over the others. He had a gilt shield, and a helmet inlaid with gold; over his armour he had a short red coat, and was easy to be distinguished from other men. When King Olaf saw that the scattered forces of the enemy gathered themselves together under the banners of their ships, he asked, "Who is the chief of the force right opposite to us?"

He was answered, that it was King Svein with the Danish army.

The king replies, "We are not afraid of these soft Danes, for there is no bravery in them; but who are the troops on the right of the Danes?"

He was answered, that it was King Olaf with the Swedish forces.

"Better it were," says King Olaf, "for these Swedes to be sitting at home killing their sacrifices, than to be venturing under our weapons from the Long Serpent. But who owns the large ships on the larboard side of the Danes?"

"That is Earl Eirik Hakonson," say they.

The king replies, "He, methinks, has good reason for meeting us; and we may expect the sharpest conflict with these men, for they are Norsemen like ourselves."

CHAPTER CXV.—*The Battle Begins.*

The kings now laid out their oars, and prepared to attack * [1000]. King Svein laid his ship against the Long Serpent. Outside of him Olaf the Swede laid himself, and set his ship's stem against the outermost ship of King Olaf's line; and on the other side lay Earl Eirik. Then a hard combat began. Earl Sigvalde held back with the oars on his ships, and did not join the fray. So says Skule Thorsteinson, who at that time was with Earl Eirik:—

"I followed Sigvalde in my youth,
And gallant Eirik; and in truth,
Tho' now I am grown stiff and old,
In the spear-song I once was bold.
Where arrows whistled on the shore
Of Svold fiord my shield I bore,
And stood amidst the loudest clash
When swords on shields made fearful crash."

And Halfred also sings thus:—

"In truth I think the gallant king,
'Midst such a foemen's gathering,
Would be the better of some score
Of his tight Throndhjem lads, or more;
For many a chief has run away,
And left our brave king in the fray,
Two great kings' power to withstand,
And one great earl's, with his small band.
The king who dares such mighty deed
A hero for his skald would need."

* The battle is said to have been fought September 9; other authorities say the 10th or 11th. Adam of Bremen lays the scene of the battle in Denmark.

CHAPTER CXVI.—*Flight of King Svein and King Olaf the Swede.*

This battle was one of the severest told of, and many were the people slain. The forecastle men of the Long Serpent, the Little Serpent, and the Crane, threw graplings and stem chains into King Svein's ship, and used their weapons well against the people standing below them, for they cleared the decks of all the ships they could lay fast hold of; and King Svein, and all the men who escaped, fled to other vessels, and laid themselves out of bow-shot. It went with this force just as King Olaf Trygveson had foreseen. Then King Olaf the Swede laid himself in their place; but when he came near the great ships it went with him as with them, for he lost many men and some ships, and was obliged to get away. But Earl Eirik laid his ship side by side with the outermost of King Olaf's ships, thinned it of men, cut the cables, and let it drive. Then he laid alongside of the next, and fought until he had cleared it of men also. Now all the people who were in the smaller ships began to run into the larger, and the earl cut them loose as fast as he cleared them of men. The Danes and Swedes laid themselves now out of shooting distance all around Olaf's ship; but Earl Eirik lay always close alongside of the ships, and used his swords and battle-axes, and as fast as people fell in his vessel others, Danes and Swedes, came in their place. So says Haldor the Unchristian:—

"Sharp was the clang of shield and sword,
And shrill the song of spears on board,
And whistling arrows thickly flew
Against the Serpent's gallant crew.
And still fresh foemen, it is said,
Earl Eirik to her long side led;
Whole armies of his Danes and Swedes,
Wielding on high their blue sword-blades."

Then the fight became most severe, and many people fell. But at last it came to this, that all King Olaf Trygveson's ships were cleared of men except the Long Serpent, on board of which all who could still carry their arms were gathered. Then Earl Eirik lay with his ship by the side of the Serpent, and the fight went on with battle-axe and sword. So says Haldor:—

"Hard pressed on every side by foes,
The Serpent reels beneath the blows;
Crash go the shields around the bow!
Breast-plates and breasts pierced thro' and thro'!
In the sword-storm the Holm beside,
The earl's ship lay alongside
The king's Long Serpent of the sea—
Fate gave the earl the victory."

CHAPTER CXVII.—*Of Earl Eirik.*

Earl Eirik was in the forehold of his ship, where a cover of shields * had been set up. In the fight, both hewing weapons, sword, and axe, and the thrust of spears had been used; and all that could be used

* Both in land and sea fights the commanders appear to have been protected from missile weapons,—stones, arrows, spears,—by a shield-burg; that is, by a party of men bearing shields surrounding them in such a way that the shields were a parapet, covering those within the circle. The Romans had a similar military arrangement of shields in sieges—the testudo.—L.

as weapon for casting was cast. Some used bows, some threw spears with the hand. So many weapons were cast into the Serpent, and so thick flew spears and arrows, that the shields could scarcely receive them; for on all sides the Serpent was surrounded by war ships. Then King Olaf's men became so mad with rage, that they ran on board of the enemies' ships, to get at the people with stroke of sword and kill them; but many did not lay themselves so near the Serpent, in order to escape the close encounter with battle-axe or sword; and thus the most of Olaf's men went overboard and sank under their weapons, thinking they were fighting on plain ground. So says Halfred:—

"The daring lads shrink not from death,—
O'erboard they leap, and sink beneath
The Serpent's keel: all armed they leap,
And down they sink five fathoms deep.
The foe was daunted at their cheers:
The king, who still the Serpent steers,
In such a strait—beset with foes—
Wanted but some more lads like those."

CHAPTER CXVIII.—*Of Einar Tambaskelfer.*

Einar Tambaskelfer, one of the sharpest of bow-shooters, stood by the mast, and shot with his bow. Einar shot an arrow at Earl Eirik, which hit the tiller-end just above the earl's head so hard that it entered the wood up to the arrow-shaft. The earl looked that way, and asked if they knew who had shot; and at the same moment another arrow flew between his hand and his side, and into the stuffing of the chief's stool, so that the barb stood far out on

the other side. Then said the earl to a man called Fin,—but some say he was of Fin (Laplander) race, and was a superior archer,—"Shoot that tall man by the mast." Fin shot; and the arrow hit the middle of Einar's bow just at the moment that Einar was drawing it, and the bow was split in two parts.

"What is that," cried King Olaf, "that broke with such a noise?"

"Norway, king, from thy hands," cried Einar.

"No! not quite so much as that," says the king; "take my bow, and shoot," flinging the bow to him.

Einar took the bow, and drew it over the head of the arrow. "Too weak, too weak," said he, "for the bow of a mighty king!" and, throwing the bow aside, he took sword and shield, and fought valiantly.

CHAPTER CXIX.—*Olaf gives his Men sharp Swords.*

The king stood on the gangways of the Long Serpent, and shot the greater part of the day; sometimes with the bow, sometimes with the spear, and always throwing two spears at once. He looked down over the ship's side, and saw that his men struck briskly with their swords, and yet wounded but seldom. Then he called aloud, "Why do ye strike so gently that ye seldom cut?" One among the people answered, "The swords are blunt and full of notches." Then the king went down into the forehold, opened the chest under the throne, and took out many sharp swords, which he handed to his men; but as he stretched down his right hand with them, some ob-

served that blood was running down under his steel glove, but no one knew where he was wounded.

CHAPTER CXX.—*The Serpent Boarded.*

Desperate was the defence in the Serpent, and there was the heaviest destruction of men done by the forecastle crew, and those of the forehold, for in both places the men were chosen men, and the ship was highest; but in the middle of the ship the people were thinned. Now when Earl Eirik saw there were but few people remaining beside the ship's mast, he determined to board; and he entered the Serpent with four others. Then came Hyrning, the king's brother-in-law, and some others against him, and there was the most severe combat; and at last the earl was forced to leap back on board his own ship again, and some who had accompanied him were killed, and others wounded. Thord Kolbeinson alludes to this:—

> "On Odin's deck, all wet with blood,
> The helm-adorned hero stood;
> And gallant Hyrning honour gained,
> Clearing all round with sword deep stained.
> The high mountain peaks shall fall,
> Ere men forget this to recall."

Now the fight became hot indeed, and many men fell on board the Serpent; and the men on board of her began to be thinned off, and the defence to be weaker. The earl resolved to board the Serpent again, and again he met with a warm reception. When the forecastle men of the Serpent saw what

he was doing, they went aft and made a desperate fight; but so many men of the Serpent had fallen, that the ship's sides were in many places quite bare of defenders; and the earl's men poured in all around into the vessel, and all the men who were still able to defend the ship crowded aft to the king, and arrayed themselves for his defence. So says Haldor the Unchristian :—

" Eirik cheers on his men,—
'On to the charge again!'
The gallant few
Of Olaf's crew
Must refuge take
On the quarter-deck.
Around the king
They stand in ring;
Their shields enclose
The king from foes,
And the few who still remain
Fight madly, but in vain.
Eirik cheers on his men—
'On to the charge again!'"

CHAPTER CXXI.—*The Serpent's Decks Cleared.*

Kolbiorn the marshal, who had on clothes and arms like the king's, and was a remarkably stout and handsome man, went up to the king on the quarter-deck. The battle was still going on fiercely even in the forehold.* But as many of the earl's men had now got into the Serpent as could find room, and his

* From the occasional descriptions of vessels in this and other battles, it may be inferred that even the Long Serpent, described in the 95th chapter as of 150 feet of keel, was only decked fore and aft; the thirty-four benches for rowers occupying the open area in the middle, and probably gangways running along the sides for communicating from the quarter-deck to the forecastle.—L.

ships lay all round her, and few were the people left in the Serpent for defence against so great a force; and in a short time most of the Serpent's men fell, brave and stout though they were. King Olaf and Kolbiorn the marshal both sprang overboard, each on his own side of the ship; but the earl's men had laid out boats around the Serpent, and killed those who leaped overboard. Now when the King had sprung overboard, they tried to seize him with their hands, and bring him to Earl Eirik; but King Olaf threw his shield over his head, and sank beneath the waters. Kolbiorn held his shield behind him to protect himself from the spears cast at him from the ships which lay round the Serpent, and he fell so upon his shield that it came under him, so that he could not sink so quickly. He was thus taken and brought into a boat, and they supposed he was the king. He was brought before the earl; and when the earl saw it was Kolbiorn, and not the king, he gave him his life. At the same moment all of King Olaf's men who were in life sprang overboard from the Serpent; and Thorkel Nefia, the king's brother, was the last of all the men who sprang overboard. It is thus told concerning the king by Halfred:—

"The Serpent and the Crane
Lay wrecks upon the main.
On his sword he cast a glance,—
With it he saw no chance.
To his marshal, who of yore
Many a war-chance had come o'er,
He spoke a word—then drew in breath,
And sprang to his deep-sea death."

CXXII.—*Of the Report among the People of the Island.*

Earl Sigvalde, as before related, came from Vindland, in company with King Olaf, with ten ships; but the eleventh ship was manned with the men of Astrid, the king's daughter, the wife of Earl Sigvalde. Now when King Olaf sprang overboard, the whole army raised a shout of victory; and then Earl Sigvalde and his men put their oars in the water and rowed towards the battle. Haldor the Unchristian tells of it thus:—

"Then first the Vindland vessels came
Into the fight with little fame;
The fight still lingered on the wave,
Tho' hope was gone with Olaf brave.
War, like a full-fed ravenous beast,
Still oped her grim jaws for the feast.
The few who stood now quickly fled,
When the shout told—'Olaf is dead!'"

But the Vindland cutter, in which Astrid's men were, rowed back to Vindland; and the report went immediately abroad, and was told by many, that King Olaf had cast off his coat-of-mail under water, and had swum, diving under the long-ships, until he came to the Vindland cutter, and that Astrid's men had conveyed him to Vindland: and many tales have been made since about the adventures of Olaf the king. Halfred speaks thus about it:—

"Does Olaf live? or is he dead?
Has he the hungry ravens fed?
I scarcely know what I should say,
For many tell the tale each way.
This I can say, nor fear to lie,
That he was wounded grievously—

So wounded in this bloody strife,
He scarce could come away with life."

But however this may have been, King Olaf Trygveson never came back again to his kingdom of Norway. Halfred Vandredaskald speaks also thus about it:—

"The witness who reports this thing
Of Trygveson, our gallant king,
Once served the king, and truth should tell,
For Olaf hated lies like hell.
If Olaf 'scaped from this sword-thing,
Worse fate, I fear, befell our king
Than people guess, or e'er can know,
For he was hemm'd in by the foe.
From the far east some news is rife
Of king sore wounded saving life;
His death, too sure, leaves me no care
For cobweb rumours in the air.
It never was the will of fate
That Olaf from such perilous strait
Should 'scape with life: this truth may grieve—
'What people wish they soon believe.'"

CHAPTER CXXIII.—*Of Earl Eirik the Son of Hakon.*

By this victory Earl Eirik Hakonson became owner of the Long Serpent, and made a great booty besides; and he steered the Serpent from the battle. So says Haldor:—

"Olaf, with glittering helmet crowned,
Had steered the Serpent through the Sound;
And people dressed their boats, and cheered,
As Olaf's fleet in splendour steered.
But the descendant of great Heming,
Whose race tells many a gallant sea-king,
His blue sword in red life-blood stained,
And bravely Olaf's long-ship gained."

Svein, a son of Earl Hakon, and Earl Eirik's

brother, was engaged at this time to marry Holmfrid, a daughter of King Olaf the Swedish king. Now when Svein the Danish king, Olaf the Swedish king, and Earl Eirik divided the kingdom of Norway between them, King Olaf got four districts in the Throndhjem country, and also the districts of More and Raumsdal; and in the east part of the land he got Ranrike, from the Gaut river to Svinasund. Olaf gave these dominions into Earl Svein's hands, on the same conditions as the sub-kings or earls had held them formerly from the upper-king of the country. Earl Eirik got four districts in the Throndhjem country, and Halogaland, Naumudal, the Fiord districts, Sogn, Hordaland, Rogaland, and North Agder, all the way to the Naze. So says Thord Kolbeinson :—

"All chiefs within our land
On Eirik's side now stand :
Erling alone, I know,
Remains Earl Eirik's foe.
All praise our generous earl,—
He gives, and is no churl :
All men are well content
Fate such a chief has sent.
From Veiga to Agder they,
Well pleased, the earl obey ;
And all will by him stand,
To guard the Norsemen's land.
And now the news is spread
That mighty Svein is dead,
And luck is gone from those
Who were the Norsemen's foes."

The Danish king Svein retained Viken as he had held it before, but he gave Raumarike and Hedemark to Earl Eirik. Svein Hakonson got the title of earl

from Olaf the Swedish king. Svein was one of the handsomest men ever seen. The earls Eirik and Svein both allowed themselves to be baptized, and took up the true faith; but as long as they ruled in Norway they allowed every one to do as he pleased in holding by his Christianity. But, on the other hand, they held fast by the old laws, and all the old rights and customs of the land, and were excellent men and good rulers. Earl Eirik had most to say of the two brothers in all matters of government.

APPENDIX TO OLAF TRYGVESON'S SAGA.

In 1697 Peringskiold published the first edition of the "Heimskringla," with a Swedish and a Latin translation. The manuscripts which he used are not now extant, or are not known; but are considered by Icelandic scholars, from orthographical and other variations, not to have been ancient, nor faithful copies of the most ancient manuscripts. The edition commenced in 1777 by Schöning under the auspices of the Danish government, and finished 1826 by Thorlacius and Werlauff (the death of Schöning having suspended the publication), in six volumes folio, was formed from the collation of three ancient manuscripts in the Arnæ Magnei Collection, and from Peringskiold's edition. The following eight chapters are considered by the antiquaries an interpolation by the writer of the manuscript which Peringskiold had before him, not being in the other three manuscripts extant; but they are admitted to be of an age prior to the end of the fourteenth century, being found verbatim in the "Codex Flateyensis," which was written between 1387 and 1395 in the saga of Olaf Trygveson. If they were not used by Snorre Sturlason himself, the just inference is, not that they were of later date than his time, but that they were not materials connected with his work—with a chronicle of the kings of Norway. Where they are placed in Peringskiold's "Heimskringla" they are evidently an interpolation, breaking the continuity of the story of Olaf Trygveson immediately after Chapter CIV. with new persons and events never recurring again, in a way which the natural tact and taste of Snorre never allow him to do. They are not the less remarkable as being certainly committed to writing between 1387

and 1395, and in Iceland, a century nearly before Columbus, in 1477, repaired to that country to obtain the nautical information on which he proceeded in his first voyage of discovery in 1492. The following are the eight chapters.—L.

CHAPTER I.—*Of the Voyage of Biarne the Son of Heriulf.*

Heriulf was a son of Bard Heriulfson, who was a relation of Ingolf the landnamman.* Ingolf gave Heriulf land between Vag and Reykanes. Heriulf dwelt first at Drepstok. His wife was called Thorgerd, and their son was called Biarne. He was a promising young man. In his earliest youth he had a desire to go abroad, and he soon gathered property and reputation; and he was by turns a year abroad and a year with his father. Biarne was soon possessor of a merchant ship of his own. The last winter, while he was in Norway, Heriulf prepared to go to Greenland with Eirik, and gave up his dwelling. There was a Christian man belonging to the Hebudes along with Heriulf, who composed the lay called the Hafgerding † Song, in which is this stave:—

> "May He whose hand protects so well
> The simple monk in lonely cell,
> And o'er the world upholds the sky,
> His own blue hall, still stand me by!"

Heriulf settled at Heriulfsnes, ‡ and became a very distinguished man. Eirik Red took up his abode at Brattahlid, and was in great consideration, and honoured by all. These were Eirik's children,—Leif, Thorvald, and Thorstein; and his daughter was called Freydis. She was married to a man called Thorvald; and they dwelt at Gardar, which is now a bishop's seat. She was a haughty, proud woman; and he was but a mean man. She was much given to gathering wealth. The people of Greenland were heathen at this time.

* The original settlers in Iceland were called Landnammen.—L.

† Hafgerding means the circle of high waves raised by currents in particular spots in the ocean.—L.

‡ Heriulfsnes, Brattahlid, Gardar, are localities in Greenland not now known.—L.

Biarne came the same summer with his ship to Eyrar,* where his father had sailed abroad from in spring. He was much struck with the news, and would not unload his vessel. When his crew asked him what he intended to do, he replied, that he was resolved to follow his old custom of taking up his winter abode with his father. "So I will steer for Greenland, if you will go with me." They one and all agreed to go with him. Biarne said, "Our expedition will be thought foolish, as none of us have ever been on the Greenland sea before." Nevertheless they set out to sea as soon as they were ready, and sailed for three days, until they lost sight of the land they had left. But when the wind failed, a north wind with fog set in, and they knew not where they were sailing to; and this lasted many days. At last they saw the sun, and could distinguish the quarters of the sky; so they hoisted sail again, and sailed a whole day and night, when they made land. They spoke among themselves about what this land could be, and Biarne said that, in his opinion, it could not be Greenland. On the question, if he should sail nearer to it, he said, "It is my advice that we sail close up to this land." They did so; and they soon saw that the land was without mountains (fielde), was covered with wood, and that there were small hills inland. They left the land on the larboard side, and had their sheet on the land side. Then they sailed two days and nights before they got sight of land again. They asked Biarne if he thought this would be Greenland; but he gave his opinion that this land was no more Greenland than the land they had seen before. "For on Greenland, it is said, there are great snow-mountains." They soon came near to this land, and saw it was flat and covered with trees. Now, as the wind fell, the ship's people talked of its being advisable to make for the land; but Biarne

* Eyrar. This is not the name of a place,—for Heriulf dwelt in Iceland at a place called Drepstok,—but of a natural feature of ground, Eyri, still called an ayre in the Orkney Islands, being a flat sandy tongue of land, suitable for landing and drawing up boats upon. All ancient dwellings in those islands, and probably in Iceland also, are situated so as to have the advantage of this kind of natural wharf; and the spit of land called an ayre very often has a small lake or pond inside of it which shelters boats.—L.

would not agree to it. They thought they would need wood and water; but Biarne said, "Ye are not in want of either." And the men blamed him for this. He ordered them to hoist the sail, which was done. They now turned the ship's bow from the land, and kept the sea for three days and nights with a fine breeze from south-west. Then they saw a third land, which was high and mountainous, and with snowy mountains. Then they asked Biarne if he would land here; but he refused altogether. "For in my opinion this land is not what we want." Now they let the sails stand, and kept along the land, and saw it was an island. Then they turned from the land, and stood out to sea with the same breeze; but the gale increased, and Biarne ordered a reef to be taken in, and not to sail harder than the ship and her tackle could easily bear. After sailing three days and nights they made, the fourth time, land; and when they asked Biarne if he thought this was Greenland or not, Biarne replies, "This is most like what has been told me of Greenland; and here we shall take to the land." They did so, and came to the land in the evening under a ness, where they found a boat. On this ness dwelt Biarne's father Heriulf; and from that it is called Heriulfsnes. Biarne went to his father's, gave up seafaring, and dwelt with his father Heriulf as long as he lived; and after his father's death continued to dwell there when at home.*

Chapter II.—*Of Leif Eirikson's Discovery of Land.*

It is next to be told that Biarne Heriulfson came over from Greenland to Norway on a visit to Earl Eirik, who received him well. Biarne tells of this expedition of his, on which he had discovered unknown lands; and people thought he had not been very curious to get knowledge, as he could not give any account of those countries, and he was somewhat blamed on this account. Biarne was made a court-man of the earl, and the summer after he went over to Greenland;

* This voyage and discovery of America by Biarne Heriulfson is supposed by the northern antiquaries to have taken place in the year 986.—L.

and afterwards there was much talk about discovering unknown lands. Leif, a son of Eirik Red of Brattahlid, went over to Biarne Heriulfson and bought the ship from him, and manned the vessel, so that in all there were thirty-five men on board. Leif begged his father Eirik to go as commander of the expedition, but he excused himself; saying he was getting old, and not so able as formerly to undergo the hardships of a sea voyage. Leif insisted that he among all their relations was the most likely to have good luck on such an expedition: and Eirik consented, and rode from home with Leif when they had got all ready for sea; but when they were coming near to the ship the horse on which Eirik was riding stumbled, and he fell from the horse and hurt his foot. "It is not destined," said Eirik, "that I should discover more lands than this of Greenland, on which we dwell and live; and now we must not run hastily into this adventure." Eirik accordingly returned home to Brattahlid; but Leif, with his comrades, in all thirty-five men, rigged out their vessel. There was a man from the South country called Tyrker with the expedition. They put the ship in order, and went to sea when they were ready. They first came to the land which Biarne had last discovered, sailed up to it, cast anchor, put out a boat, and went on shore; but there was no grass to be seen. There were huge snowy mountains up the country; but all the way from the sea up to these snowy ridges the land was one field of snow, and it appeared to them a country of no advantages. Leif said, "It shall not be said of us, as it was of Biarne, that we did not come upon the land; for I will give the country a name, and call it Helleland.* Then they went on board again, put to sea, and found another land. They sailed in towards it, cast anchor, put out a boat, and landed. The country was flat and overgrown with wood; and the strand far around consisted of a white sand, and low towards the sea. Then Leif said, "We shall give this land a name according to its kind, and call it Markland." † Then they

* Helleland is a naked land of rocks—Hella=a flat stone.—L.

† Markland, a wooded country. Mark is the woodland of a farm. The antiquaries consider Helleland to have been Newfoundland, and Markland some part of Nova Scotia, from the description.—L.

hastened on board, and put to sea again with an on-shore wind from north-east, and were out for two days, and made land. They sailed towards it, and came to an island which lay on the north side of the land, where they landed to wait for good weather. There was dew upon the grass; and having accidentally got some of the dew upon their hands and put it to their mouths, they thought they had never tasted anything so sweet as it was. Then they went on board, and sailed into a sound that was between the island and a ness which went out northwards from the land, and sailed west past the ness. There was very shallow water in ebb-tide, so that their ship lay dry; and there was a long way between their ship and the water. They were so desirous to get to the land that they would not wait till their vessel floated, but ran to the land, to a place where a river comes out of a lake. As soon as their ship was afloat, they took the boats, rowed to the ship, towed her up the river, and from thence into the lake, where they cast anchor, carried their beds out of the ship, and set up their tents. They resolved to put things in order for wintering there, and they erected a large house. They did not want for salmon, both in the river and in the lake; and they thought the salmon larger than any they had ever seen before. The country appeared to them of so good a kind, that it would not be necessary to gather fodder for the cattle for the winter. There was no frost in winter, and the grass was not much withered. Day and night were more equal than in Greenland or Iceland; for on the shortest day the sun was in the sky between the Eyktarstad and the Dagmalastad.* Now when they were ready with their house-building, Leif said to his fellow-travellers, "Now I will divide the crew into two divisions, and explore the country: half shall stay at home and do the work, and the other half shall search the land; but so that they do not go farther than that they can come

* According to Vigfusson (see Dict., *sub voce* eykt) this means a day of seven hours, according to Hildebrand a day of six hours, and according to the editors of *Antiquitates Americanæ* a day of nine hours. Many commentators have written upon the meaning of this phrase, which in the original runs thus: "sól hafði þar eyktarstað ok dagmálastað um skammdegi."

back in the evening, and that they do not wander from each other." This they continued to do for some time. Leif changed about, sometimes with them, and sometimes with those at home. Leif was a stout and strong man, and of manly appearance; and he was besides a prudent, sagacious man in all respects.

CHAPTER III.—*Leif Winters in this Country, and calls it Vinland; then sails Home to Greenland, and rescues Shipwrecked Men.*

It happened one evening that a man of the party was missing; and it was the South-country man, Tyrker. Leif was very sorry for it; because Tyrker had been long in his father's house, and he loved Tyrker in his childhood. Leif blamed his comrades very much, and prepared to go with twelve men on an expedition to find him; but they had gone only a short way from the station before Tyrker came to meet them, and he was joyfully received. Leif soon perceived that his foster-father was merry. Tyrker had a high forehead, sharp eyes, with a small face, and was little in size and ugly; but was very dexterous in all feats. Leif said to him, "Why art thou so late, my foster-father? and why didst thou leave thy comrades?" He spoke at first long in German, rolled his eyes, and knit his brows; but they could not make out what he was saying. After a while and some delay, he said in Norse, "I did not go much farther than they; and yet I have something altogether new to relate, for I found vines and grapes." "Is that true, my foster-father?" said Leif. "Yes, true it is," answered he; "for I was born where there is no scarcity of vines and grapes." Now they slept all night, and next morning Leif said to his men, "Now we have two occupations to attend to, and day about; namely, to gather grapes or cut vines, and to fell wood in the forest to load our vessel." And this advice was followed. It is related that their stern-boat was filled with grapes, and then a cargo of wood was hewn for the vessel. There was also self-sown wheat in the fields, and a tree which is called

Mosur.* Of all these they took samples; and some of the trees were so large that they were used in houses. Towards spring they made ready and sailed away; and Leif gave the country a name from its productions, and called it Vinland. They put to sea, and had a favourable breeze until they came in sight of Greenland and the fielde below the snow-covered mountain range. Then one of the men said to Leif, "Why do you bear away so much?" Leif replied, "I mind my helm, but I attend to other things too: do you see nothing strange?" He answered that he saw nothing to speak of. "I don't know," said Leif, "whether it be a ship or a rock I see there." Then they all looked, and said it was a rock. But he saw so much sharper than they did, that he could distinguish people upon the rock. "Now I will put the vessel before the wind," says Leif, "so that we may get close to them, in case they are people who want to meet us and need our help; and if they are not men of peace, it is in our power to do as we please, and not in theirs." Now they came up to the rock, let down the sail, cast anchor, and put out another little boat which they had with them. Then Tyrker hailed them, and asked who was the commander of these people. He called himself Thorer, and said he was a Norwegian. "And what," said he, "is your name?" Leif told his name. "Are you a son of Eirik Red of Brattahlid?" Leif replied it was so. "And now," said Leif, "I invite you all to come on board my ship, with all your goods that the vessel can stow." They accepted the offer; and then they sailed to Eiriksfiord, and until they came to Brattahlid, where they discharged the cargo. Leif offered Thorer and his wife Gudrid, and three others, lodging with himself, and found lodging elsewhere for the rest of the people, both of Thorer's crew and his own. Leif took fifteen men from the rock, and was thereafter called Leif the Lucky. After that time Leif advanced greatly in wealth and consideration. That winter a sickness came among Thorer's people, and he himself and a great part of his crew died. The same winter Eirik Red also died. This expedition to Vinland was much talked of; and Leif's brother Thorvald thought that the

* Supposed to be Bird's-eye maple.

country had not been explored enough in different places. Then Leif said to Thorvald, "You may go, brother, in my ship to Vinland if you like; but I will first send the ship for the timber which Thorer left upon the rock." And so it was done.

CHAPTER IV.—*Of Thorvald Eirikson, Leif's Brother; and of the Skrælings.*

Now Thorvald made ready for his voyage with thirty men, after consulting his brother Leif. They rigged their ship, and put to sea. Nothing is related of this expedition until they came to Vinland, to the booths put up by Leif, where they secured the ship and tackle, and remained quietly all winter, and lived by fishing. In spring Thorvald ordered the vessel to be rigged, and that some men should proceed in the long-boat westward along the coast, and explore it during the summer. They thought the country beautiful and well wooded, the distance small between the forest and the sea, and the strand full of white sand. There were also many islands, and very shallow water. They found no abode for man or beast; but upon an island far towards the west they found a corn-barn constructed of wood. They found no other trace of human work, and came back in autumn to Leif's booths. The following spring Thorvald with his merchant ship proceeded eastwards, and towards the north along the land. Opposite to a cape they met bad weather, and drove upon the land and broke their keel, and remained there a long time to repair the vessel. Thorvald said to his comrades, "We will stick up the keel here upon the ness, and call the place Keelness *;" which they did. Then they sailed away eastward along the country, which was everywhere covered with wood. They moored the vessel to the land, laid out gangways to the shore, and Thorvald with all his ship's company landed. He said, "Here it is beautiful, and I would willingly set up my farm here." They afterwards went on board, and saw three specks upon the sand within the point,

* Keelness (Icelandic Kjalarnes) is supposed by the antiquaries to be the present Cape Cod.

and went to them, and found these were three skin-boats with three men under each boat. They divided their men and took all of them prisoners except one man, who escaped with his boat. They killed eight of them, and then went to the point and looked about them. Within this fiord they saw several eminences, which they took to be habitations. Then a heavy drowsiness came upon them, and they could not keep themselves awake, but all of them fell asleep. A sudden scream came to them, and they all awoke; and mixed with the scream they thought they heard the words, "Awake, Thorvald, with all thy comrades, if ye will save your lives. Go on board your ship as fast as you can, and leave this land without delay." In the same moment an innumerable multitude from the interior of the fiord came in skin-boats, and laid themselves alongside. Then said Thorvald, "We shall put up our war-screens along the gunwales, and defend ourselves as well as we can; but not use our weapons much against them." They did so accordingly. The Skrælings shot at them for a while, and then made off as fast as they could wherever they saw the way was open to fly. Then Thorvald asked if any one was wounded, and they said nobody was hurt. He said, "I have got a wound under the arm. An arrow flew between the gunwale and the shield under my arm: here is the arrow, and it will be my death-wound. Now I advise you to make ready with all speed to return; but ye shall carry me up to the point which I thought would be so convenient for a dwelling. It may be that it was true what I said, that here I would dwell for a while. Ye shall bury me there, and place a cross at my head and another at my feet, and call the place Crossness.* Christianity had been established in Greenland at this time; but Eirik Red was dead before Christianity was introduced. Now Thorvald died, and they did everything as he had ordered. Then they went away in search of their fellow-travellers; and they related to each other all the news. They remained in their dwelling all winter, and gathered vines and grapes, and put them on board their ships. Towards spring they prepared

* Crossness is supposed by the antiquaries who find nothing but truth in this saga to be Gurnet Point.—L.

to return to Greenland, where they arrived with their vessel and landed at Eiriksfiord, bringing heavy tidings to Leif.

CHAPTER V.—*Of Thorstein Eirikson, Leif's Brother, and his Voyage to Vinland.*

In the meantime it had happened in Greenland that Thorstein of Eiriksfiord had married, and taken to wife Gudrid, the daughter of Thorbiorn, who had been married, as before related, to Thorer the Northman. Thorstein Eirikson bethought him now that he would go to Vinland for his brother Thorvald's body. He rigged out the same vessel and chose an able and stout crew. He had with him twenty-five men, and his wife Gudrid; and as soon as they were ready he put to sea, and they lost sight of land. They drove about on the ocean the whole summer without knowing where they were; and in the first week of winter* they landed at Lysufiord in Greenland, in the western settlement. Thorstein looked for lodgings for his men, and got his whole ship's crew accommodated, but not himself and his wife; so that for some nights they had to sleep on board. At that time Christianity was but young in Greenland. One day, early in the morning, some men came to their tent, and the leader asked them what people were in the tent. Thorstein replies, "Two: who is it that inquires?" "Thorstein," was the reply; "and I am called Thorstein the Black, and it is my errand here to offer thee and thy wife lodging beside me." Thorstein said he would speak to his wife about it; and as she gave her consent, he agreed to it. "Then I shall come for you to-morrow with my yoke, for I do not want means to entertain you; but few care to live in my house, for I and my wife live lonely, and I am very melancholy. I have also a different religion from yours, although I think the one you have the best." Now the following morning he came for them with horses; and they took up their abode with Thorstein Black, who was very friendly towards them. Gudrid had a good outward appear-

* The Icelanders reckoned winter from the first Saturday after the 14th of October.

and he got ready a crew of sixty men and five women; and then they made the agreement, Karlsefne and his people, that each of them should have equal share in what they made of gain. They had with them all kinds of cattle, having the intention to settle in the land if they could. Karlsefne asked Leif for his houses in Vinland, and he said he would lend them, but not give them. Then they put to sea with the ship, and came to Leif's houses safe, and carried up their goods. They soon had in hand a great and good prize; for a whale had driven on shore, both large and excellent. They went to it and cut it up, and had no want of food. Their cattle went up into the land; but soon they were unruly, and gave trouble to them. They had one bull with them. Karlsefne let wood be felled and hewed for shipping it, and had it laid on a rock to dry. They had all the good of the products of the land which were there,—both grapes, and wood, and other products. After that first winter, and when summer came, they were aware of Skrælings being there; and a great troop of men came out of the woods. The cattle were near to them, and the bull began to bellow and roar very loud, and with that the Skrælings were frightened, and made off with their bundles,—and these were of furs, and sables, and all sorts of skins; and they turned to Karlsefne's habitation, and wanted to go into the houses, but Karlsefne defended the doors. Neither party understood the language of the other. Then the Skrælings took their bundles and opened them, and offered them, and wanted to have weapons in exchange for them; but Karlsefne forbade his men to sell weapons. And then he took this plan with them, that he told the women to bear out milk and dairy products to them; and when they saw these things they would buy them, and nothing else. And now the trade for the Skrælings was such, that they carried away their winnings in their stomachs; and Karlsefne and his comrades got both their bags and skin-goods, and so they went away. And now it is to be told that Karlsefne let a good strong fence be made round the habitation, and strengthened it for defence. At this time Gudrid, Karlsefne's wife, lay in of a male child, and the child was called Snorre. In the beginning of the

next winter came the Skrælings again to them, and in much greater numbers than before, and with the same kind of wares. Then said Karlsefne to the women, "Now ye shall carry out the same kind of food as was best liked the last time, and nothing else." And when they saw that, they threw their bundles in over the fence: and Gudrid sat in the door within, by the cradle of Snorre her son. Then came a shadow to the door, and a woman went in with a black kirtle on, rather short, with a snood around her head; clear yellow hair; pale; with large eyes, so large that no one ever saw such eyes in a human head. She went to where Gudrid was sitting, and said, "What art thou called?" "I am called Gudrid; and what art thou called?" "I am called Gudrid," said she. Then the goodwife Gudrid put out her hand to her, that she might sit down beside her. And at the same time Gudrid heard a great noise, and the woman had vanished; and at the same moment one of the Skrælings was killed by one of Karlsefne's housemen, because he was about to take one of their weapons; and they made off as fast as possible, leaving behind them clothes and goods. No one had seen this woman but Gudrid. "Now," says Karlsefne, "we must be cautious, and take counsel; for I think they will come the third time with hostility and many people. We shall now take the plan, that ten men go out to that ness and show themselves there, and the rest of our men shall go into the woods, and make a clearance for our cattle against the time the enemy comes out of the forest; and we shall take the bull before us, and let him go in front." And it happened so that at the place they were to meet there was a lake on the one side, and the forest on the other. The plan which Karlsefne had laid down was adopted. The Skrælings came to the place where Karlsefne proposed to fight; and there was a battle there, and many of the Skrælings fell. There was one stout and handsome man among the Skrælings' people, and Karlsefne thought that he must be their chief. One of the Skrælings had taken up an axe and looked at it a while, and wielded it against one of his comrades, and cut him down, so that he fell dead instantly. Then the stout man took the axe, looked at it a while, and threw it into the

sea as far as he could. They then fled to the forest as fast as they could, and so closed the battle. Karlsefne remained there with his men the whole winter; but towards spring he made known that he would not stay there longer, and would return to Greenland. Now they prepared for their voyage and they took much goods from thence,—vines, grapes, and skin wares. They put to sea, and their ship came safe to Eiriksfiord, and they were there for the winter.

CHAPTER VII.—*Of Freydis, Eirik's Daughter, and her Voyage to Vinland, and her Misdeeds.*

Now the conversation began again to turn upon a Vinland voyage, as the expedition was both gainful and honourable. The same summer that Karlsefne returned from Vinland, a ship arrived in Greenland from Norway. Two brothers commanded the ship, Helge and Finboge; and they remained that winter in Greenland. The brothers were of Icelandic descent, from Eastfiord. It is now to be told that Freydis, Eirik's daughter, came home from Gardar, and went to the abode of Helge and Finboge, and proposed to them that they should go to Vinland with their vessel, and have half with her of all the goods they could get there. They agreed to this. Then she went to the abode of her brother Leif, and asked him to give her the houses he had built in Vinland; and he answered as before, that he would lend, but not give the houses. It was agreed upon between the brothers and Freydis that each should have thirty fighting men, besides women. But Freydis broke this, and had five men more, and concealed them; and the brothers knew nothing of this until they arrived in Vinland. They went to sea, and had agreed beforehand that they should sail in company, if they could do so: and the difference was but little, although the brothers came a little earlier, and had carried up their baggage to Leif's houses. And when Freydis came to the land, her people cleared the ship, and carried her baggage also up to the house. Then said Freydis, "Why are ye carrying your things in here?" "Because we thought," said they, "that the whole of the agreement with us should be held." She said, "Leif lent the

house to me, not to you." Then said Helge, "In evil we brothers cannot strive with thee;" and bore out their luggage, and made a shed, and built it farther from the sea on the borders of a lake, and set all about it in good order. Freydis let trees be cut down for her ship's cargo. Now winter set in, and the brothers proposed to have some games for amusement, and to pass the time. So it was done for a time till discord came among them, and the games were given up, and none went from the one house to the other; and things went on so during a great part of the winter. It happened one morning that Freydis got out of her berth, and put on her clothes, but not her shoes; and the weather was such that much dew had fallen. She took the cloak of her husband over her, and went out, and went to the house of the brothers, and to the door. A man had gone out a little before, and left the door behind him half shut. She opened the door, and stood in the doorway a little, and was silent. Finboge lay the farthest inside in the hut, and was awake. He said, "What wilt thou have here, Freydis?" She said, "I want thee to get up and go out with me, for I would speak with thee." He did so. They went to a tree that was lying under the eaves of the hut, and sat down. "How dost thou like this place?" said she. He said, "The country, methinks, is good; but I do not like this quarrel that is come among us, for I think there is no cause for it." "Thou art right," says she, "and I think so too; and it is my errand to thy dwelling that I want to buy the ship of you brothers, as your ship is larger than mine, and I would break up from hence." "I will let it be so," said he, "if that will please thee." Now they parted so, and she went home, and Finboge to his bed. She went up into her berth, and with her cold feet wakened Thorvald, who asked why she was so cold and wet. She answered with great warmth, "I went to these brothers," says she, "to treat about their ship, for I want a larger ship; and they took it so ill that they struck and abused me. And thou, useless man! wilt neither avenge my affront nor thy own; and now must I feel that I am away from Greenland, but I will separate from thee if thou dost not avenge this." And now he could not bear her reproaches, and told his men to rise as fast as possible

and take their weapons. They did so, and went to the tents of the brothers, and went in as they all lay asleep and seized them all and bound them, and led them out bound, one after the other; and Freydis had each of them put to death as he came out. Now all the men were killed; but the women were left, and nobody would kill them. Then said Freydis, "Give me an axe in my hand." This was done, and she turned on those five women, and did not give over till they were all dead. Now they returned to their own huts after this evil deed; and people could only observe that Freydis thought she had done exceedingly well; and she said to her comrades, "If it be our lot to return to Greenland, I shall take the life of the man who speaks of this affair; and we shall say that we left them here when we went away." Now they got ready the ship early in spring which had belonged to the brothers, with all the goods they could get, or that the ship could carry, sailed out to sea, and had a good voyage; and the ship came early in summer to Eiriksfiord. Karlsefne was there still, and had his ship ready for sea, but waited a wind; and it was a common saying, that never had a richer ship sailed from Greenland than that which he steered. Freydis went home now to her house, which had stood without damage in the meantime. She bestowed many gifts on her followers that they might conceal her wickedness; and she remained now on her farm. All were not so silent about their misdeed and wickedness, that something did not come up about it. This came at last to the ears of Leif her brother, and he thought this report was very bad. Leif took three men of Freydis's followers, and tortured them to speak, and they acknowledged the whole affair, and their tales agreed together. "I do not care," says Leif, "to treat my sister Freydis as she deserves; but this I will foretell of them, that their posterity will never thrive." And it went so that nobody thought anything of them but evil from that time.

CHAPTER VIII.—*Of Thorfin Karlsefne and his Descendants.*

Now we have to say that Karlsefne got ready his ship and sailed out to sea. He came on well, and reached Norway

safely, and remained there all winter and sold his wares; and he and his wife were held in esteem by the most considerable people in Norway. Now in the following spring he fitted out his ship for Iceland; and when he was quite ready, and his ship lay outside the pier waiting a wind, there came to him a South-country man from Bremen in Saxonland, who would deal with him for his house-besom.* "I will not sell it," said he. "I will give thee a half mark of gold for it," said the South-country man. Karlsefne thought it was a good offer, and sold it accordingly. The South-country man went away with the house-broom, and Karlsefne did not know what the wood was. It was mosur-wood from Vinland. Now Karlsefne put to sea, and his ship came to land north at Skagafiord, and there he put up his vessel for the winter. In spring he purchased Glaumbajarland, where he took up his abode, and dwelt there as long as he lived, and was a man of great consideration; and many men are descended from him and his wife Gudrid, and it was a good family. When Karlsefne died Gudrid took the management of his estate, and Snorre her son, who was born in Vinland. And when Snorre was married Gudrid went out of the country, and went to the south and came back again to Snorre's estate, and he had built a church at Glamba. Afterwards Gudrid became a nun, and lived a hermit-life, and did so as long as she lived. Snorre had a son called Thorgeir, who was father to Bishop Brand's mother Yngvild. The daughter of Snorre Karlsefneson was called Halfrid. She was mother of Runolf, the father of Bishop Thorlak. Karlsefne and Gudrid had a son also called Biorn. He was father of Thorun, the mother of Bishop Biorn. Many people are descended from Karlsefne, and his kin have been lucky; and Karlsefne has given the most particular accounts of all these travels of which here something is related.

* Husasnotra is translated house-besom, the exact meaning of the word not being known. A besom shaft would be too small, however rare the wood, to be made into anything. The bar for securing the house-door was as common and necessary in every house, and is probably meant. Fin Magnusen translates it with *broom*.—L.

VII.

SAGA OF KING OLAF HARALDSON THE SAINT.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

OLAF HARALDSON the Saint's Saga is the longest, the most important, and the most finished of all the sagas in *Heimskringla*. The life of Olaf will be found treated more or less freely in *Agrip*, in *Historia Norvegiæ*, in *Thjodrek the Monk*, in the legendary saga, and in *Fagrskinna*. Other old Norse literature relating to this epoch :—

Are's Islendingabok
Landnama.
Kristni Saga.
Biskupa-sögur.
Njala.
Gunlaugs Saga Ormstungu.
Bjarnar Saga Hitdælakappa.
Hallfredar Thattr Vandrædaskalds.
Eyrbyggia.
Viga Styrs Saga.
Laxdæla.
Fostbrœdra.
Gretla.
Liosvetninga.
Færeyinga.
Orkneyinga.

Olaf Haraldson was born 995, went as a viking at the age of twelve, 1007; visited England, one summer and three winters, 1009–1012; in France two summers and one winter, 1012–1013; spent the winter in Normandy, 1014; returned to Norway and was recognised as King, April 3, 1015; fled from Norway the winter of 1028–1029; fell at Stiklestad, July 29 (or August 31), 1030.

* King Olaf the Saint reigned from about the year 1015 to 1030. The death of King Olaf Trygveson was in the year 1000; and Earl Eirik held the government for the Danish and Swedish kings about fifteen years.—L.

Skalds quoted in this saga are:—Ottar Svarte, Sigvat Skald, Thord Kolbeinson, Berse Torfason, Brynjolf, Arnor Jarlaskald, Thord Siarekson, Harek, Thorarin Loftunga, Halvard Hareksblese, Bjarne Gulbraskald, Jokul Bardson, Thormod Kolbrunarskald, Gissur, Thorfin Mun, Hofgardaref.

CHAPTER I.—*Of Saint Olaf's bringing up.*

Olaf, Harald Grenske's son, was brought up by his stepfather Sigurd Syr and his mother Asta. Hrane the Far-travelled lived in the house of Asta, and fostered this Olaf Haraldson. Olaf came early to manhood, was handsome in countenance, middle-sized in growth, and was even when very young of good understanding and ready speech. Sigurd his stepfather was a careful householder, who kept his people closely to their work, and often went about himself to inspect his corn-rigs and meadow-land, the cattle, and also the smith-work, or whatsoever his people had on hand to do.

CHAPTER II.—*Of Olaf and King Sigurd Syr.*

It happened one day that King Sigurd wanted to ride from home, but there was nobody about the house; so he told his step-son Olaf to saddle his horse. Olaf went to the goats' pen, took out the he-goat that was the largest, led him forth, and put the king's saddle on him, and then went in and told King Sigurd he had saddled his riding horse. Now when King Sigurd came out and saw what Olaf had done, he said, "It is easy to see that thou wilt little regard my orders; and thy mother will think it right

that I order thee to do nothing that is against thy own inclination. I see well enough that we are of different dispositions, and that thou art far more proud than I am." Olaf answered little, but went his way laughing.

CHAPTER III.—*Of King Olaf's Accomplishments.*

When Olaf Haraldson grew up he was not tall, but middle-sized in height, although very thick, and of good strength. He had light brown hair, and a broad face, which was white and red. He had particularly fine eyes, which were beautiful and piercing, so that one was afraid to look him in the face when he was angry. Olaf was very expert in all bodily exercises, understood well to handle his bow, and was distinguished particularly in throwing his spear by hand: he was a great swimmer, and very handy, and very exact and knowing in all kinds of smith-work, whether he himself or others made the thing. He was distinct and acute in conversation, and was soon perfect in understanding and strength. He was beloved by his friends and acquaintances, eager in his amusements, and one who always liked to be the first, as it was suitable he should be from his birth and dignity. He was called Olaf the Great.*

CHAPTER IV.—*Beginning of King Olaf's War Expeditions.*

Olaf Haraldson was twelve years old when he, for the first time, went on board a ship of war [1007]. His

* He was called Olaf *Digri*, the latter word referring not only to the size of the body, but also to qualities of the mind.

mother Asta got Hrane, who was called the foster-father of kings, to command a ship of war and take Olaf under his charge; for Hrane had often been on war expeditions. When Olaf in this way got a ship and men, the crew gave him the title of king; for it was the custom that those commanders of troops who were of kingly descent, on going out upon a viking cruise, received the title of king immediately, although they had no land or kingdom. Hrane sat at the helm; and some say that Olaf himself was but a common rower, although he was king of the men-at-arms. They steered east along the land, and came first to Denmark. So says Ottar Svarte, in his lay which he made about King Olaf: —

"Young was the king when from his home
He first began in ships to roam,
His ocean-steed to ride
To Denmark o'er the tide.
Well exercised art thou in truth—
In manhood's earnest work, brave youth!
Out from the distant north
Mighty hast thou come forth."

Towards autumn he sailed eastward to the Swedish dominions, and there harried and burnt all the country round; for he thought he had good cause of hostility against the Swedes, as they killed his father Harald. Ottar Svarte says distinctly that he came from the east, out by way of Denmark: —

"Thy ship from shore to shore,
With many a well-plied oar,
Across the Baltic foam is dancing,—
Shields, and spears, and helms glancing!
Hoist high the swelling sail
To catch the freshening gale!

There's food for the raven-flight
Where thy sail-winged ship shall light:
Thy landing-tread
The people dread;
And the wolf howls for a feast
On the shore-side in the east."

CHAPTER V.—*Olaf's first Battle.*

The same autumn Olaf had his first battle at Sotasker, which lies in the Swedish skerry circle.* He fought there with some vikings, whose leader was Sote. Olaf had much fewer men, but his ships were larger, and he laid his ships between some blind rocks, which made it difficult for the vikings to get alongside; and Olaf's men threw grappling irons into the ships which came nearest, drew them up to their own vessels, and cleared them of men. The vikings took to flight after losing many men. Sigvat the skald tells of this fight in the lay in which he reckons up King Olaf's battles: —

"They launch his ship where waves are foaming—
To the sea shore
Bore mast and oar,
And sent him o'er the seas a-roaming.
Where did the sea-king first draw blood?
In the battle shock
At Sote's rock:
The wolves howl over their fresh food."

* The coast of Sweden and Norway is surrounded by a belt of rocks and islets, within which there is a smooth-water passage generally along the coast. This circle or belt is called the Skiergard—the skerry-gard,—being a protection of rocks or skerries against the force of the ocean.—L.

CHAPTER VI.—*Foray in Svithiod.*

King Olaf steered thereafter eastwards to Svithiod, and into the Lag (the Mælar lake), and ravaged the land on both sides. He sailed all the way up to Sigtuna, and laid his ships close to the old Sigtuna. The Swedes say the stone-heaps are still to be seen which Olaf had laid under the ends of the gangways from the shore to the ships. When autumn was advanced, Olaf Haraldson heard that Olaf the Swedish king was assembling an army, and also that he had laid iron chains across Stoksund (the channel between the Mælar lake and the sea), and had laid troops there; for the Swedish king thought that Olaf Haraldson would be kept in there till frost came, and he thought little of Olaf's force, knowing he had but few people. Now when King Olaf Haraldson came to Stoksund he could not get through, as there was a castle west of the sound, and men-at-arms lay on the south; and he heard that the Swedish king was come there with a great army and many ships. He therefore dug a canal across the flat land Agnafit out to the sea. Over all Svithiod* all the running waters fall into the Mælar lake; but the only outlet of it to the sea is so small that many rivers are wider, and when much rain or snow falls the water rushes in a great

* Svithiod, the country about Upsala, was Sweden Proper, and distinct from Gautland and other earldoms subject to Sweden. Scania belonged to Denmark.—L.

cataract out by Stoksund, and the lake rises high and floods the land. It fell heavy rain just at this time; and as the canal was dug out to the sea, the water and stream rushed into it. Then Olaf had all the rudders unshipped, and hoisted all sail aloft. It was blowing a strong breeze astern, and they steered with their oars, and the ships came in a rush over all the shallows, and got into the sea without any damage. Now went the Swedes to their king, Olaf, and told him that Olaf the Great had slipped out to sea; on which the king was enraged against those who should have watched that Olaf did not get away. This passage has since been called King's Sound; but large vessels cannot pass through it, unless the waters are very high. Some relate that the Swedes were aware that Olaf had cut across the tongue of land, and that the water was falling out that way; and they flocked to it with the intention to hinder Olaf from getting away, but the water undermined the banks on each side so that they fell in with the people, and many were drowned: but the Swedes contradict this as a false report, and deny the loss of people. The king sailed to Gotland in harvest, and prepared to plunder; but the Gotlanders assembled, and sent men to the king, offering him a scat. The king found this would suit him, and he received the scat, and remained there all winter. So says Ottar Svarte:—

"Thou seaman-prince! thy men are paid:
The scat on Gotlanders is laid;
Young man or old
To our seamen bold
Must pay, to save his head:

The Yngling princes fled,
Eysyssel people bled:
Who can't defend the wealth they have
Must die, or share with the rover brave."

CHAPTER VII.—*The Second Battle.*

It is related here that King Olaf, when spring set in, sailed east to Eysyssel, and landed and plundered: the Eysyssel men came down to the strand and gave him battle. King Olaf gained the victory, pursued those who fled, and laid waste the land with fire and sword. It is told that when King Olaf first came to Eysyssel they offered him scat, and when the scat was to be brought down to the strand the king came to meet it with an armed force, and that was not what the bondes there expected; for they had brought no scat, but only their weapons with which they fought against the king, as before related. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"With much deceit and bustle
To the heath of Eysyssel
The bondes brought the king,
To get scat at their weapon-thing.
But Olaf was too wise
To be taken by surprise:
Their legs scarce bore them off
O'er the common fast enough."

CHAPTER VIII.—*The Third Battle.*

After this they sailed to Finland and plundered there, and went up the country. All the people fled to the forest, and they had emptied their houses of all

household goods. The king went far up the country, and through some woods, and came to some dwellings in a valley called Herdaler,—where, however, they made but small booty, and saw no people; and as it was getting late in the day, the king turned back to his ships. Now when they came into the woods again people rushed upon them from all quarters, and made a severe attack. The king told his men to cover themselves with their shields, but before they got out of the woods he lost many people, and many were wounded; but at last, late in the evening, he got to the ships. The Finlanders conjured up in the night, by their witchcraft, a dreadful storm and bad weather on the sea; but the king ordered the anchors to be weighed and sail hoisted, and beat off all night to the outside of the land. The king's luck prevailed more than the Finlanders' witchcraft; for he had the luck to beat round the Balagard's-side * in the night, and so got out to sea. But the Finnish army proceeded on land, making the same progress as the king made with his ships. So says Sigvat:—

"The third fight was at Herdaler, where
The men of Finland met in war
The hero of the royal race,
With ringing sword-blades face to face.
Off Balagard's shore the waves
Ran hollow; but the sea-king saves
His hard-pressed ship, and gains the lee
Of the east coast through the wild sea."

* Balagard's-side is supposed to have been the coast between Abo and Helsingfors; and Herdaler some valley in that neighbourhood.—L.

CHAPTER IX.—*The Fourth Battle in Sudervik.*

King Olaf sailed from thence to Denmark, where he met Thorkel the Tall,* brother of Earl Sigvalde, and went into partnership with him; for he was just ready to set out on a cruise. They sailed southwards to the Jutland coast, to a place called Sudervik,† where they overcame many viking ships. The vikings, who usually have many people to command, give themselves the title of kings, although they have no lands to rule over. King Olaf went into battle with them, and it was severe; but King Olaf gained the victory, and a great booty. So says Sigvat:—

"Hark! hark! The war-shout
Through Sudervik rings,
And the vikings brings out
To fight the two kings.
Great honour, I'm told,
Won these vikings so bold:
But their bold fight was vain,
For the two brave kings gain."

CHAPTER X.—*The Fifth Battle in Friesland.*

King Olaf sailed from thence south to Friesland, and lay under the strand of Kinlima‡ in dreadful

* See the Saga of Olaf Trygveson, chaps. 38 and 39. See also Freeman's *Norman Conquest*. Thorkel came to England with a fleet 1009, took Canterbury in September 1011, entered the service of Ethelred 1012. After Ethelred's death he served King Canute. He was banished from England 1021.

† Sudervik is no doubt Syndervik in the isle Holmland, in Ringkiobing fiord in North Jutland.—L.

‡ Kinlima-side is a part of the coast of Old Friesland, now North Holland, supposed to have been the original seat of the Cimbri. The name appears to be preserved in Kinnimer-land, partly reckoned in North Holland and partly in South Holland.—L.

weather. The king landed with his men; but the people of the country rode down to the strand against them, and he fought them. So says Sigvat:—

"Under Kinlima's cliff,
This battle is the fifth.
The brave sea-rovers stand
All on the glittering sand;
And down the horsemen ride
To the edge of the rippling tide:
But Olaf taught the peasant band
To know the weight of a viking's hand."

CHAPTER XI.—*The Death of King Svein Forked Beard.*

The king sailed from thence westward to England. It was then the case that the Danish king, Svein Forked Beard, was at that time in England with a Danish army, and had been fixed there for some time, and had seized upon King Ethelred's kingdom. The Danes had spread themselves so widely over England, that it was come so far that King Ethelred had departed from the country, and had gone south to Valland.* The same autumn that King Olaf came to England, it happened that King Svein died suddenly in the night in his bed; † and it is said by Englishmen that Edmund the Saint killed him, in the same way that the holy Mercurius had killed the apostate Julian. When Ethelred, the king of the English, heard this in Flanders, he returned directly to England; and no sooner was he come back, than he sent an invitation to all the men who would

* Valland. See note, chapter 24 of Harald Harfager's Saga.—L.

† King Svein came to England in July 1013. Ethelred fled to Normandy in January 1014, and Svein died in Gainsborough in February. Snorre's statement is therefore incorrect.

enter into his pay, to join him in recovering the country. Then many people flocked to him; and among others, came King Olaf with a great troop of Northmen to his aid. They steered first to London, and sailed into the Thames with their fleet; but the Danes had a castle within. On the other side of the river is a great trading place, which is called Sudvirke.* There the Danes had raised a great work, dug large ditches, and within had built a bulwark of stone, timber, and turf, where they had stationed a strong army. King Ethelred ordered a great assault; but the Danes defended themselves bravely, and King Ethelred could make nothing of it. Between the castle† and Southwark (Sudvirke) there was a bridge, so broad that two waggons could pass each other upon it. On the bridge were raised barricades, both towers and wooden parapets, in the direction of the river,‡ which were nearly breast high; and under the bridge were piles driven into the bottom of the river. Now when the attack was made the troops stood on the bridge everywhere, and defended themselves. King Ethelred was very anxious to get possession of the bridge, and he called together all the chiefs to consult how they should get the bridge broken down. Then said King Olaf he would attempt to lay his fleet alongside of it, if the other ships would do the same. It was then determined in this council that they should lay their war forces

* Sudvirke—Southwark.—L.
† On the site, probably, of the Tower of London.—L.
‡ That is, across the bridge.—L.

under the bridge; and each made himself ready with ships and men.

Chapter XII.—*The Sixth Battle.*

King Olaf ordered great platforms of floating wood to be tied together with hazel bands, and for this he took down old houses; and with these, as a roof, he covered over his ships so widely, that it reached over the ships' sides. Under this screen he set pillars so high and stout, that there both was room for swinging their swords, and the roofs were strong enough to withstand the stones cast down upon them. Now when the fleet and men were ready, they rode up along the river; but when they came near the bridge, there were cast down upon them so many stones and missile weapons, such as arrows and spears, that neither helmet nor shield could hold out against it; and the ships themselves were so greatly damaged, that many retreated out of it. But King Olaf, and the Northmen's fleet with him, rowed quite up under the bridge, laid their cables around the piles which supported it, and then rowed off with all the ships as hard as they could down the stream. The piles were thus shaken in the bottom, and were loosened under the bridge. Now as the armed troops stood thick of men upon the bridge, and there were likewise many heaps of stones and other weapons upon it, and the piles under it being loosened and broken, the bridge gave way; and a great part of the men upon it fell into

the river, and all the others fled, some into the castle, some into Southwark. Thereafter Southwark was stormed and taken. Now when the people in the castle saw that the river Thames was mastered, and that they could not hinder the passage of ships up into the country, they became afraid, surrendered the tower, and took Ethelred to be their king. So says Ottar Svarte :—

" London Bridge is broken down,—
Gold is won, and bright renown.
Shields resounding,
War-horns sounding,
Hild is shouting in the din !
Arrows singing,
Mail-coats ringing—
Odin makes our Olaf win !"

And he also composed these :—

" King Ethelred has found a friend :
Brave Olaf will his throne defend—
In bloody fight
Maintain his right,
Win back his land
With blood-red hand,
And Edmund's son upon his throne replace—
Edmund, the star of every royal race !"

Sigvat also relates as follows :—

" At London Bridge stout Olaf gave
Odin's law to his war-men brave—
'To win or die !'
And their foemen fly.
Some by the dyke-side refuge gain—
Some in their tents on Southwark plain !
This sixth attack
Brought victory back."

CHAPTER XIII.—*The Seventh Battle.*

King Olaf passed all the winter with King Ethelred, and had a great battle at Hringmara Heath* in Ulfkel's land, the domain which Ulfkel Snilling at that time held; and here again the king was victorious. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"To Ulfkel's land came Olaf bold,
A seventh sword-thing he would hold.
The race of Ella filled the plain—
Few of them slept at home again!
Hringmara heath
Was a bed of death:
Harfager's heir
Dealt slaughter there."

And Ottar sings of this battle thus:—

"From Hringmara field
The chime of war,
Sword striking shield,
Rings from afar.
The living fly;
The dead piled high
The moor enrich:
Red runs the ditch."

The country far around was then brought in subjection to King Ethelred; but the Thingmen† and

* This is an unknown place, Hringmaraheidi; but must be in East Angeln, as it is called Ulfkel Snilling's land, and he appears to have been chief of the part of England called East Angeln occupied by the Danes. Ashdown in Kent, and Assington in Essex, have each been taken by antiquaries for this battlefield.—L.

† Thing-men were hired men-at-arms; called Thing-men probably from being men above the class of thralls or unfree men, and entitled to appear at Things, as being udal-born to land at home. They appear to have hired themselves out as hird-men; that is, court-men, or the body-guard of the kings. The Varings at the court of Constantinople were of this description. The victories of King Svein and of Canute the Great have been ascribed to the superiority of these men, who formed bodies of standing troops, over levies of peasantry.—L.

the Danes held many castles, besides a great part of the country.

CHAPTER XIV.—*Eighth and Ninth Battles of Olaf.*

King Olaf was commander of all the forces when they went against Canterbury; and they fought there until they took the town, killing many people and burning the castle. So says Ottar Svarte:—

"All in the grey of morn
Broad Canterbury's forced.
Black smoke from house-roofs borne
Hides fire that does its worst;
And many a man laid low
By the battle-axe's blow,
Waked by the Norsemen's cries,
Scarce had time to rub his eyes."

Sigvat reckons this King Olaf's eighth battle:—

"Of this eighth battle I can tell
How it was fought, and what befell.
The castle tower
With all his power
He could not take,
Nor would forsake.
The Perthmen * fought,
Nor quarter sought;
By death or flight
They left the fight.
Olaf could not this earl stout
From Canterbury quite drive out."

At this time King Olaf was entrusted with the whole land defence of England, and he sailed round the land with his ships of war. He laid his ships at

* Perthshire men, as hired men-at-arms, are alluded to here by Sigvat; and allusions to hired men from other countries fighting with King Nokve at the battle of Hafersfiord, against Harald Harfager, is made by the skald Hornklofe.—L.

land at Nyjamoda,* where the troops of the Thingmen were, and gave them battle and gained the victory. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"The youthful king stained red the hair
Of Angeln men, and dyed his spear
At Newport in their hearts' dark blood;
And where the Danes the thickest stood—
Where the shrill storm round Olaf's head
Of spear and arrow thickest fled,
There thickest lay the Thingmen dead!
Nine battles now of Olaf bold,
Battle by battle, I have told."

King Olaf then scoured all over the country, taking scat of the people, and plundering where it was refused. So says Ottar:—

"The English race could not resist thee,
With money thou madest them assist thee;
Unsparingly thou madest them pay
A scat to thee in every way:
Money, if money could be got—
Goods, cattle, household gear, if not.
Thy gathered spoil, borne to the strand,
Was the best wealth of English land."

Olaf remained here for three years [1010–1012].

CHAPTER XV.—*The Tenth Battle.*

The third year King Ethelred died, and his sons Edmund and Edward took the government [1012]. Then Olaf sailed southwards out to sea, and had a battle at Hringsfiord,† and took a castle situated at

* Nyjamoda is supposed to be Newport in the Isle of Wight; more likely New Romney, the river-mouth of the Rother in Kent.—L.

† Hringsfiördr, Grislupollar, Fetlafiördr, Seliupollar, Gunnvaldsborg, are localities in Valland,—that is, on the west coast of France, between

Holar, where vikings resorted, and burnt the castle. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"Of the tenth battle now I tell,
Where it was fought, and what befell.
Up on the hill in Hringsfiord fair
A robber nest hung in the air:
The people followed our brave chief,
And razed the tower of the viking thief.
Such rock and tower, such roosting-place,
Was ne'er since held by the roving race."

CHAPTER XVI.—*Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Battles.*

Then King Olaf proceeded westwards to Grislupollar, and fought there with vikings at Williamsby; and there also King Olaf gained the victory. So says Sigvat:—

"The eleventh battle now I tell,
Where it was fought, and what befell.
At Grislupol our young fir's name
O'ertopped the forest trees in fame:
Brave Olaf's name—nought else was heard
But Olaf's name, and arm, and sword.
Of three great earls, I have heard say,
His sword crushed helm and head that day."

Next he fought westward on Fetlafiord, as Sigvat tells:—

"The twelfth fight was at Fetlafiord,
Where Olaf's honour-seeking sword
Gave the wild wolf's devouring teeth
A feast of warriors doomed to death."

From thence King Olaf sailed southwards to Seliupollar, where he had a battle. He took there a castle

the Seine and the Garonne,—but which antiquaries do not pretend to fix. The "castle on the heights occupied by vikings" may be Mont St. Michel, and the Karlsar of chapter 17 may be the Garonne; but these are mere conjectures of antiquaries on the context.—L.

called Gunvaldsborg, which was very large and old. He also made prisoner the earl who ruled over the castle, and who was called Geirfin. After a conference with the men of the castle, he laid a scat upon the town and earl, as ransom, of twelve thousand gold shillings; which was also paid by those on whom it was imposed. So says Sigvat:—

"The thirteenth battle now I tell,
Where it was fought, and what befell.
In Seliupol was fought the fray,
And many did not survive the day.
The king went early to the shore,
To Gunvaldsborg's old castle-tower;
And a rich earl was taken there,
Whose name was Geirfin, I am sure."

CHAPTER XVII.—*Fourteenth Battle, and King Olaf's Dream.*

Thereafter King Olaf steered with his fleet westward to Karlsar,* and tarried there and had a fight. And while King Olaf was lying in Karlsa river waiting a wind, and intending to sail up to Norvasund,† and then on to the land of Jerusalem, he dreamt a remarkable dream—that there came to him a great and important man, but of a terrible appearance withal, who spoke to him, and told him to give up his purpose of proceeding to that land. "Return back to thy udal, for thou shalt be king over Norway for ever." He interpreted this dream to mean that he should be king over the country, and his posterity after him for a long time.

* Karlsar is not known; supposed to be the Garonne.—L.
† Nörvasund is the Straits of Gibraltar.—L.

CHAPTER XVIII.—*Fifteenth Battle.*

After this appearance to him he turned about, and came to Poitou,* where he plundered and burnt a merchant town called Varrande. Of this Ottar speaks: —

"Our young king, blythe and gay,
Is foremost in the fray:
Poitou he plunders, Tuskland† burns,—
He fights and wins where'er he turns."

And also Sigvat says: —

"The Norsemen's king is on his cruise,
His blue steel staining,
Rich booty gaining,
And all men trembling at the news.
The Norsemen's king is up the Loire:
Rich Parthenay
In ashes lay;
Far inland reached the Norsemen's spear."

CHAPTER XIX.—*Of the Earls of Rouen.*

King Olaf had been two summers and one winter in the west in Valland on this cruise; and thirteen years had now passed since the fall of King Olaf Trygveson. During this time earls had ruled over Norway; first Hakon's sons Eirik and Svein, and afterwards Eirik's sons Hakon and Svein. Hakon was a sister's son of King Canute, the son of Svein. During this time there were two earls in Valland,‡

* Peituland is Poitou. Varrande is supposed to be the town Parthenay.—L.

† Tuskaland is the land of Tours on the Loire.—L.

‡ Valland, as before noticed, means the whole west coast of France.—L.

William and Robert; their father was Richard earl of Rouen. They ruled over Normandy.* Their sister was Queen Emma, whom the English king Ethelred had married; and their sons were Edmund, Edward the Good, Edwy, and Edgar. Richard the earl of Rouen was a son of Richard the son of William Long Spear, who was the son of Rolf Ganger, the earl who first conquered Normandy; and he again was a son of Ragnvald the Mighty, earl of More, as before related.† From Rolf Ganger are descended the earls of Rouen, who have long reckoned themselves of kin to the chiefs in Norway, and hold them in such respect that they always were the greatest friends of the Northmen; and every Northman found a friendly country in Normandy, if he required it. To Normandy King Olaf came in autumn [1013], and remained all winter [1014] in the river Seine ‡ in good peace and quiet.

* Normandy was that part of Valland formerly called Neustria; which, about the year 912, was ceded by Charles the Simple to Rolf Ganger, who gave it the name of Normandy, from its being occupied by the Northmen. The chief town was Ruda or Ruduborg, now Rouen; from which the earls of Normandy were called Ruda-jarlar—the Rouen earls, not earls of Normandy. The title appears to have been personal, at least among the Northmen, not attached to land possessing peculiar rights or burdens as an earldom.—L.

† Snorre's statements are faulty. The chronology is, Rolf, 912–927; his son William Long Spear, 927-943; William's son Richard, 943-996. Richard had a daughter Emma, the wife of Ethelred and afterwards of Canute, and a son Richard the Good, 996–1026. After him come his sons, first Richard III., 1026–1028; then Robert the Devil, the father of William the Conqueror. Edmund, Edwy, and Edgar were Ethelred's sons by his first wife, Emma; his second wife bore him Edward the Confessor and a son by name Alfred.

‡ Signa is evidently the river Seine.—L.

CHAPTER XX.—*Of Einar Tambaskelfer.*

After Olaf Trygveson's fall, Earl Eirik gave peace to Einar Tambaskelfer, the son of Eindride Styrkarson; and Einar went north with the earl to Norway. It is said that Einar was the strongest man and the best archer that ever was in Norway. His shooting was sharp beyond all others; for with a blunt arrow he shot through a raw, soft ox-hide, hanging over a beam. He was better than any man at running on snow-shoes, was a great man at all exercises, was of high family, and rich. The earls Eirik and Svein married their sister Bergliot to Einar. Their son was named Eindride. The earls gave Einar great fiefs in Orkadal, so that he was one of the most powerful and able men in Throndhjem country, and was also a great friend of the earls, and a great support and aid to them.

CHAPTER XXI.—*Of Erling Skialgson.*

When Olaf Trygveson ruled over Norway, he gave his brother-in-law Erling half of the land scat, and royal revenues between the Naze and Sogn. His other sister he married to the Earl Ragnvald Ulfson, who long ruled over West Gautland. Ragnvald's father, Ulf, was a brother of Sigrid the Haughty, the mother of Olaf the Swedish king. Earl Eirik was ill pleased that Erling Skialgson had so large a dominion, and he took to himself all the

king's estates, which King Olaf had given to Erling. But Erling levied, as before, all the land scat in Rogaland; and thus the inhabitants had often to pay him the land scat, otherwise he laid waste their land. The earl made little of the business, for no bailiff of his could live there, and the earl could only come there in guest-quarters, when he had a great many people with him. So says Sigvat:—

"Olaf the king
Thought the bonde Erling
A man who would grace
His own royal race.
One sister the king
Gave the bonde Erling;
And one to an earl,
And she saved him in peril."

Earl Eirik did not venture to fight with Erling, because he had very powerful and very many friends, and was himself rich and popular, and kept always as many retainers about him as if he held a king's court. Erling was often out in summer on plundering expeditions, and procured for himself means of living; for he continued his usual way of high and splendid living, although now he had fewer and less convenient fiefs than in the time of his brother-in law King Olaf Trygveson. Erling was one of the handsomest, largest, and strongest men; a better warrior than any other; and in all exercises he was like King Olaf himself. He was, besides, a man of understanding, zealous in everything he undertook, and a deadly man at arms. Sigvat talks thus of him:—

"No earl or baron, young or old,
Match with this bonde brave can hold.
Mild was brave Erling, all men say,
When not engaged in bloody fray;
His courage he kept hid until
The fight began, then foremost still
Erling was seen in war's wild game,
And famous still is Erling's name."

It was a common saying among the people, that Erling had been the most valiant who ever held lands under a king in Norway. Erling's and Astrid's children were these—Aslak, Skialg, Sigurd, Lodin, Thorer, and Ragnhild, who was married to Thorberg Arnason. Erling had always with him ninety free-born men or more; and both winter and summer it was the custom in his house to drink at the mid-day meal according to a measure,* but at the night meal there was no measure in drinking. When the earl was in the neighbourhood he had 200† men or more. He never went to sea with less than a fully-manned ship of twenty benches of rowers. Erling had also a ship of thirty-two benches of rowers, which was, besides, very large for that size, and which he used in viking cruises, or on an expedition; and in it there were 200 men at the very least.

CHAPTER XXII.—*Of the Herse Erling Skialgson.*

Erling had always at home on his farm thirty slaves, besides other serving-people. He gave his slaves a

* There were silver studs in a row from the rim to the bottom of the drinking horn or cup; and as it went round each drank till the stud appeared above the liquor. This was drinking by measure.—L.

† 240.

certain day's work; but after it he gave them leisure, and leave that each should work in the twilight and at night for himself, and as he pleased. He gave them arable land to sow corn in, and let them apply their crops to their own use. He laid upon each a certain quantity of labour to work themselves free by doing it; and there were many who bought their freedom in this way in one year, or in the second year, and all who had any luck could make themselves free within three years. With this money he bought other slaves; and to some of his freed people he showed how to work in the herring-fishery; to others he showed some useful handicraft; and some cleared his outfields and set up houses. He helped all to prosperity.

Chapter XXIII.—*Of Earl Eirik.*

When Earl Eirik had ruled over Norway for twelve years, there came a message to him from his brother-in-law King Canute, the Danish king, that he should go with him on an expedition westward to England; for Eirik was very celebrated for his campaigns, as he had gained the victory in the two hardest engagements which had ever been fought in the north countries. The one was that in which the Earls Hakon and Eirik fought with the Jomsborg vikings; the other that in which Earl Eirik fought with King Olaf Trygveson. Thord Kolbeinson speaks of this:—

"A song of praise
Again I raise.

To the earl bold
The word is told,
That Knut the Brave
His aid would crave:
The earl, I knew,
To friend stands true."

The earl would not sleep upon the message of the king, but sailed immediately out of the country, leaving behind his son Earl Hakon to take care of Norway; and, as he was but seventeen years of age, Einar Tambaskelfer was to be at his hand to rule the country for him.

Eirik met King Canute in England, and was with him when he took the castle of London. Earl Eirik had a battle also to the westward of the castle of London, and killed Ulfkel Snilling. So says Thord Kolbeinson:—

"West of London town we passed,
And our ocean-steeds made fast,
And a bloody fight begin,
England's lands to lose or win.
Blue sword and shining spear
Laid Ulfkel's dead corpse there.
Our Thingmen hear the war-shower sounding
Our grey arrows from their shields rebounding."

Earl Eirik was a winter in England, and had many battles there. The following autumn he intended to make a pilgrimage to Rome, but he died in England of a bloody flux.*

* King Ethelred died 1014; Edmund Ironside, according to the Saxon Chronicle, in 1016, at the feast of Saint Andrew. Canute married Emma, the widow of Ethelred, in 1017. The murder of Edmund by Henry Strion is not mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle; but in a manuscript in the Cotton Library, quoted by Turner, it is said, "Nocte siquidem sequentis diei festivitatis Sancti Andreæ Lundoniæ perimitur insidiis Edrici Strioni." This manuscript is stated to be written within fifty

CHAPTER XXIV.—*The Murder of Edmund.*

King Canute came to England the summer that King Ethelred died, and had many battles with Ethelred's sons, in which the victory was sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. Then King Canute took Queen Emma in marriage; and their children were Harald, Hardacanute, and Gunhild.* King Canute then made an agreement with King Edmund, that each of them should have a half of England. In the same month Henry Strion murdered King Edmund. King Canute then drove all Ethelred's sons out of England. So says Sigvat:—

> "Now all the sons of Ethelred
> Were either fallen, or had fled:
> Some slain by Canute,—some, they say,
> To save their lives had run away."

CHAPTER XXV.—*Of Olaf and Ethelred's Sons.*

King Ethelred's sons came to Rouen in Valland from England, to their mother's brother, the same summer that King Olaf Haraldson came from the west from his viking cruise, and they were all during the winter in Normandy together. They made an agreement with each other that King Olaf should have Northumberland, if they could succeed in

years of the event. It gives a strong corroboration of the accuracy, as to events, of the saga accounts. Edmund was not the son of Emma, but of a former marriage of King Ethelred. Emma was married in 1002 to Ethelred.

* Harald was not the son of Emma, but of Canute's concubine Elgiva. Gunhild married Emperor Henry III., and died 1038.

taking England from the Danes. Therefore about harvest, Olaf sent his foster-father Hrane to England to collect men-at-arms; and Ethelred's sons sent tokens to their friends and relations with him. King Olaf, besides, gave him much money with him to attract people to them. Hrane was all winter in England, and got promises from many powerful men of fidelity, as the people of the country would rather have native kings over them; but the Danish power had become so great in England, that all the people were brought under their dominion.

CHAPTER XXVI.—*Battle of King Olaf.*

In spring [1014] King Olaf and King Ethelred's sons set out together to the west, and came to a place in England called Jungufurda,* where they landed with their army, and moved forward against the castle. Many men were there who had promised them their aid. They took the castle; and killed many people. Now when King Canute's men heard of this they assembled an army, and were soon in such force that Ethelred's sons could not stand against it; and they saw no other way left but to return to Rouen. Then King Olaf separated from them, and would not go back to Valland, but sailed northwards along England, all the way to Northumberland, where he put into a haven at a place called Valde;† and in a battle there with the townspeople

* Jungufurda must be some place on the south coast of England.—L.

† Valde must be some place on the coast of Northumberland—that is, north of the Humber. But it is to be observed that the ships of that age

and merchants he gained the victory, and a great booty.

CHAPTER XXVII.—*King Olaf's Expedition to Norway.*

King Olaf left his long-ships* there behind, but made ready two ships of burden; and had with him 220† men in them, well-armed and chosen people. He sailed out to sea northwards in harvest, but encountered a tremendous storm, and they were in danger of being lost; but as they had a chosen crew, and the king's luck with them, all went on well. So says Ottar:—

"Olaf, great stem of kings, is brave—
Bold in the fight, bold on the wave.
No thought of fear
Thy heart comes near.
Undaunted, 'midst the roaring flood,
Firm at his post each shipman stood;
And thy two ships stout
The gale stood out."

And further he says:—

"Thou able chief! with thy fearless crew
Thou meetest, with skill and courage true,
The wild sea's wrath
On thy ocean path.

even the largest, were worked with oars, and coasted close to the shore, and at night lay at, or even on, the beach; so that harbours with anchorage were of less importance than flat shores to haul up their vessels on, and the localities cannot be determined by our harbours.—L.

* There is a distinction evidently here between the class of vessels called long-ships and the large sea-going vessels. The long-ship has been, like the Crane and the Long Serpent, a vessel intended for rowing up rivers and along the coast, but not for sea voyages, and in autumn not thought suitable for crossing the North Sea.—L.

† Two long hundreds and twenty = 260.

Though waves mast-high were breaking round,
Thou findest the middle of Norway's ground,
With helm in hand
On Sæla's strand."

It is related here that King Olaf came from sea to the very middle of Norway; and the isle is called Sæla where they landed, and is outside of Stad. King Olaf said he thought it must be a lucky day for them, since they had landed at Sæla* in Norway; and observed it was a good omen that it so happened. As they were going up in the isle, the king slipped with one foot in a place where there was clay, but supported himself with the other foot. Then said he, "The king falls." "Nay," replies Hrane, "thou didst not fall, king, but set fast foot in the soil." The king laughed thereat, and said, "It may be so if God will." They went down again thereafter to their ships, and sailed to Ulfasund, where they heard that Earl Hakon was south in Sogn, and was expected north as soon as wind allowed with a single ship.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—*Earl Hakon taken Prisoner in Saudungssund by Olaf.*

King Olaf steered his ships within the ordinary ships' course when he came abreast of Fialer district, and ran into Saudungssund. There he laid his two vessels one on each side of the sound, with a thick cable between them. At the same moment

* Sæll means lucky. Sæla resembles this word in sound: hence the king's pun.—L.

Hakon, Earl Eirik's son, came rowing into the sound with a manned ship; and as they thought these were but two merchant-vessels that were lying in the sound, they rowed between them. Then Olaf and his men draw the cable up right under Hakon's ship's keel, and wind it up with the capstan.* As soon as the vessel's course was stopped her stern was lifted up, and her bow plunged down; so that the water came in at her fore-end and over both sides, and she upset. King Olaf's people took Earl Hakon and all his men whom they could get hold of out of the water, and made them prisoners; but some they killed with stones and other weapons, and some were drowned. So says Ottar:—

"The black ravens wade
In the blood from thy blade.
Young Hakon so gay,
With his ship, is thy prey:
His ship, with its gear,
Thou hast ta'en; and art here,
Thy forefathers' land
From the earl to demand."

Earl Hakon was led up to the king's ship. He was the handsomest man that could be seen. He had long hair, as fine as silk, bound about his head with a gold ornament.

When he sat down in the fore-hold, the king said to him, "It is not false what is said of your family, that ye are handsome people to look at; but now your luck has deserted you."

* Vindáss—windlass, capstan, winch—was a machine consequently in common use in their vessels. From the size of the ships, and the lowering and raising their masts, the practical use of the pulley and of the lever, as applied to sea business, has been understood probably by the Northmen.—L.

Hakon the earl replied, "It has always been the case that success is changeable; and there is no luck in the matter. It has gone with your family as with mine, to have by turns the better lot. I am little beyond childhood in years; and at any rate we could not have defended ourselves, as we did not expect any attack on the way. It may turn out better with us another time."

Then said King Olaf, "Dost thou not apprehend that thou art in that condition that, hereafter, there can be neither victory nor defeat for thee?"

The earl replies, "That is what thou only canst determine, king, according to thy pleasure."

Olaf says, "What wilt thou give me, earl, if for this time I let thee go, whole and unhurt?"

The earl asks what he would take.

"Nothing," says the king, "except that thou shalt leave the country, give up thy kingdom, and take an oath that thou shalt never go into battle against me."

The earl answered, that he would do so. And now Earl Hakon took the oath that he would never fight against Olaf, or seek to defend Norway against him, or attack him; and King Olaf thereupon gave him and all his men life and peace. The earl got back the ship which had brought him there, and he and his men rowed their way. Thus says Sigvat of him:—

"In old Saudungs sound
The king Earl Hakon found,
Who little thought that there
A foeman was so near.

The best and fairest youth
Earl Hakon was in truth,
That speaks the Danish tongue,
And of the race of great Hakon."

CHAPTER XXIX.—*Earl Hakon's Departure from Norway.*

After this [1014] the earl made ready as fast as possible to leave the country and sail over to England. He met King Canute, his mother's brother, there, and told him all that had taken place between him and King Olaf. King Canute received him remarkably well, placed him in his court in his own house, and gave him great power in his kingdom. Earl Hakon dwelt a long time with King Canute. During the time Svein and Hakon ruled over Norway, a reconciliation with Erling Skialgson was effected, and secured by Aslak, Erling's son, marrying Gunhild, Earl Svein's daughter; and the father and son, Erling and Aslak, retained all the fiefs which King Olaf Trygveson had given to Erling. Thus Erling became a firm friend of the earl's, and their mutual friendship was confirmed by oath.

CHAPTER XXX.—*Asta's Preparations to Receive her Son Olaf.*

King Olaf went now eastward along the land, holding Things with the bondes all over the country. Many went willingly with him; but some, who were Earl Svein's friends or relations, spoke against him. Therefore King Olaf sailed in all haste eastward to Viken; went in there with his ships; set them on

the land; and proceeded up the country, in order to meet his stepfather, Sigurd Syr. When he came to Vestfold he was received in a friendly way by many who had been his father's friends or acquaintances; and also there and in Folden were many of his family. In autumn [1014] he proceeded up the country* to his stepfather King Sigurd's, and came there one day very early. As Olaf was coming near to the house, some of the servants ran beforehand to the house, and into the room. Olaf's mother, Asta, was sitting in the room, and around her some of her girls. When the servants told her of King Olaf's approach, and that he might soon be expected, Asta stood up directly, and ordered the men and girls to put everything in the best order. She ordered four girls to bring out all that belonged to the decoration of the room, and put it in order with hangings and benches. Two fellows brought straw for the floor, two brought forward four-cornered tables and the drinking-jugs, two bore out victuals and placed the meat on the table, two she sent away from the house to procure in the greatest haste all that was needed, and two carried in the ale; and all the other serving men and girls went outside of the house. Messengers went to seek King Sigurd wherever he might be, and brought to him his dress-clothes, and his horse with gilt saddle, and his bridle, which was gilt and set with precious stones. Four men she sent off to the four quarters of the country to invite all the great people to a feast, which she prepared as a rejoicing for her son's return.

* To Ringarike.

All who were before in the house she made to dress themselves with the best they had, and lent clothes to those who had none suitable.

CHAPTER XXXI.—*King Sigurd's Dress.*

King Sigurd Syr was standing in his corn-field when the messengers came to him and brought him the news, and also told him all that Asta was doing at home in the house. He had many people on his farm. Some were then shearing corn, some bound it together, some drove it to the building, some unloaded it and put it in stack or barn; but the king, and two men with him, went sometimes into the field, sometimes to the place where the corn was put into the barn. His dress, it is told, was this:—he had a blue kirtle and blue breeches; shoes which were laced about the legs; a grey cloak, and a grey wide-brimmed hat; a veil* before his face; a staff in his hand with a gilt-silver head on it, and a silver ring around it. Of Sigurd's living and disposition it is related that he was a very gain-making man, who attended carefully to his cattle and husbandry, and managed his housekeeping himself. He was nowise given to pomp, and was rather taciturn. But he was a man of the best understanding in Norway, and also excessively wealthy in movable property. Peaceful he was, and nowise haughty. His wife Asta was generous and high-minded. Their children were,

* Often used by men in summer to protect the face from the stings of moschetoes.—L.

Guthorm, the eldest; then Gunhild; the next Halfdan, Ingirid, and Harald.* The messengers said to Sigurd, "Asta told us to bring thee word how much it lay at her heart that thou shouldst on this occasion comport thyself in the fashion of great men, and show a disposition more akin to Harald Harfager's race than to thy mother's father's, Hrane Thin-nose, or Earl Nereid the Old, although they too were very wise men." The king replies, "The news ye bring me is weighty, and ye bring it forward in great heat. Already before now Asta has been taken up much with people who were not so near to her; and I see she is still of the same disposition. She takes this up with great warmth; but can she lead her son out of the business with the same splendour she is leading him into it? If it is to proceed so, methinks they who mix themselves up in it regard little property or life. For this man, King Olaf, goes against a great superiority of power; and the wrath of the Danish and Swedish kings lies at the foot of his determination, if he ventures to go against them."

CHAPTER XXXII.—*Of the Feast.*

When the king had said this he sat down, and made them take off his shoes, and put corduvan† boots on, to which he bound his gold spurs. Then

* Harald became king of Norway, and was called Hardrade (the severe).

† Corduvan was tanned leather. The untanned skin probably had been the ordinary wear of the king.—L.

he put off his cloak and coat, and dressed himself in his finest clothes, with a scarlet cloak over all; girded on his sword, set a gilded helmet upon his head, and mounted his horse. He sent his labouring people out to the neighbourhood, and gathered to him thirty well-clothed men, and rode home with them. As they rode up to the house, and were near the room, they saw on the other side of the house the banners of Olaf coming waving; and there was he himself, with about 100* men all well equipped. People were gathered over all upon the house-tops. King Sigurd immediately saluted his stepson from horseback in a friendly way, and invited him and his men to come in and drink a cup with him. Asta, on the contrary, went up and kissed her son, and invited him to stay with her; and land, and people, and all the good she could do for him stood at his service. King Olaf thanked her kindly for her invitation. Then she took him by the hand, and led him into the room to the high-seat. King Sigurd got men to take charge of their clothes, and give their horses corn; and then he himself went to his high-seat, and the feast was made with the greatest splendour.

Chapter XXXIII.—*Conversation of King Olaf and King Sigurd.*

King Olaf had not been long here before he one day called his stepfather King Sigurd, his mother

* = 120 men.

Asta, and his foster-father Hrane to a conference and consultation. Olaf began thus: "It has so happened," said he, "as is well known to you, that I have returned to this country after a very long sojourn in foreign parts, during all which time I and my men have had nothing for our support but what we captured in war, for which we have often hazarded both life and soul; for many an innocent man have we deprived of his property, and some of their lives: and foreigners are now sitting in the possessions which my father, his father, and their forefathers for a long series of generations owned, and to which I have udal right. They have not been content with this, but have taken to themselves also the properties of all our relations who are descended from Harald Harfager. To some they have left little, to others nothing at all. Now I will disclose to you what I have long concealed in my own mind, that I intend to take the heritage of my forefathers; but I will not wait upon the Danish or Swedish king to supplicate the least thing from them, although they for the time call that their property which was Harald Harfager's heritage. To say the truth, I intend rather to seek my patrimony with battle-axe and sword, and that with the help of all my friends and relations, and of those who in this business will take my side. And in this matter I will so lay hand to the work that one of two things shall happen,—either I shall lay all this kingdom under my rule which they got into their hands by the slaughter of my kinsman Olaf Trygveson, or I shall fall here upon

my inheritance in the land of my fathers. Now I expect of thee, Sigurd, my stepfather, as well as other men here in the country who have udal right of succession to the kingdom, according to the law made by King Harald Harfager, that nothing shall be of such importance to you as to prevent you from throwing off the disgrace from our family of being slow at supporting the man who comes forward to raise up again our race. But whether ye show any manhood in this affair or not, I know the inclination of the people well,—that all want to be free from the slavery of foreign masters, and will give aid and strength to the attempt. I have not proposed this matter to any before thee, because I know thou art a man of understanding, and can best judge how this my purpose shall be brought forward in the beginning, and whether we shall, in all quietness, talk about it to a few persons, or instantly declare it to the people at large. I have already shown my teeth by taking prisoner the Earl Hakon, who has now left the country, and given me, under oath, the part of the kingdom which he had before; and I think it will be easier to have Earl Svein alone to deal with, than if both were defending the country against us."

King Sigurd answers, "It is no small affair, King Olaf, thou hast in thy mind; and thy purpose comes more, methinks, from hasty pride than from prudence. But it may be there is a wide difference between my humble ways and the high thoughts thou hast; for whilst yet in thy childhood thou wast full always of ambition and desire of command, and now

thou art experienced in battles, and hast formed thyself upon the manner of foreign chiefs. I know therefore well, that as thou hast taken this into thy head, it is useless to dissuade thee from it; and also it is not to be denied that it goes to the heart of all who have courage in them, that the whole Harfager race and kingdom should go to the ground. But I will not bind myself by any promise, before I know the views and intentions of other Upland kings; but thou hast done well in letting me know thy purpose, before declaring it publicly to the people. I will promise thee, however, my interest with the kings, and other chiefs, and country people; and also, King Olaf, all my property stands to thy aid, and to strengthen thee. But we will only produce the matter to the community so soon as we see some progress, and expect some strength to this undertaking; for thou canst easily perceive that it is a daring measure to enter into strife with Olaf the Swedish king, and Canute, who is king both of Denmark and England; and thou requirest great support under thee, if it is to succeed. It is not unlikely, in my opinion, that thou wilt get good support from the people, as the commonalty always loves what is new; and it went so before, when Olaf Trygveson came here to the country, that all rejoiced at it, although he did not long enjoy the kingdom."

When the consultation had proceeded so far, Asta took up the word. "For my part, my son, I am rejoiced at thy arrival, but much more at thy advancing thy honour. I will spare nothing for that

purpose that stands in my power, although it be but little help that can be expected from me. But if a choice could be made, I would rather that thou shouldst be the supreme king of Norway, even if thou shouldst not sit longer in thy kingdom than Olaf Trygveson did, than that thou shouldst not be a greater king than Sigurd Syr is, and die the death of old age." With this the conference closed. King Olaf remained here a while with all his men. King Sigurd entertained them, day about, the one day with fish and milk, the other day with flesh-meat and ale.*

CHAPTER XXXIV.—*Of the Kings in the Upland Districts of Norway.*

At that time there were many kings in the Uplands who had districts to rule over, and the most of them were descended from Harald Harfager. In Hedemark two brothers ruled—Hrorek and Ring; in Gudbrandsdal, Gudrod: and there was also a king in Raumarike; and one had Hadaland and Thoten; and in Valders also there was a king. With these district-kings Sigurd had a meeting up in Hadaland, and Olaf Haraldson also met with them. To these district-kings whom Sigurd had assembled he set forth his stepson Olaf's purpose, and asked their aid, both of men and in counsel and consent; and represented to them how necessary it was to cast off the yoke which the Danes and Swedes had laid upon

* This is a common way of living in Norway to this day among the peasants and middle class.—L.

them. He said that there was now a man before them who could head such an enterprise; and he recounted the many brave actions which Olaf had achieved upon his war-expeditions.

Then King Hrorek says, "True it is that Harald Harfager's kingdom has gone to decay, none of his race being supreme king over Norway. But the people here in the country have experienced many things. When King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, was king, all were content; but when Gunhild's sons ruled over the country, all were so weary of their tyranny and injustice that they would rather have foreign men as kings, and be themselves more their own rulers; * for the foreign kings were usually abroad, and cared little about the customs of the people if the scat they laid on the country was paid. When enmity arose between the Danish King Harald and Earl Hakon, the Jomsborg vikings made an expedition against Norway; then the whole people arose, and threw the hostilities from themselves; and thereafter the people encouraged Earl Hakon to keep the country, and defend it with sword and spear against the Danish king. But when he had set himself fast in the kingdom with the help of the people, he became so hard and overbearing towards the country-folks, that they would no longer suffer him. The Throndhjem people killed him, and raised to the kingly power Olaf Trygveson, who was of the

* This was very much the social condition of the people of Norway during the 400 years they were annexed to Denmark previous to 1814. They enjoyed no political liberty, but had all their old civil liberty and customs.—L.

udal succession to the kingdom, and in all respects well fitted to be a chief. The whole country's desire was to make him supreme king, and raise again the kingdom which Harald Harfager had made for himself. But when King Olaf thought himself quite firmly seated in his kingdom, no man could rule his own concerns for him. With us small kings he was so unreasonable, as to take to himself not only all the scat and duties which Harald Harfager had levied from us, but a great deal more. The people at last had so little freedom under him, that it was not allowed to every man to believe in what god he pleased. Now since he has been taken away we have kept friendly with the Danish king; have received great help from him when we have had any occasion for it; and have been allowed to rule ourselves, and live in peace and quiet in the inland country, and without any overburden. I am therefore content that things be as they are, for I do not see what better rights I am to enjoy by one of my relations ruling over the country; and if I am to be no better off, I will take no part in the affair."

Then said King Ring, his brother, "I will also declare my opinion that it is better for me, if I hold the same power and property as now, that my relative is king over Norway, rather than a foreign chief, so that our family may again raise its head in the land. It is, besides, my opinion about this man Olaf, that his fate and luck must determine whether he is to obtain the kingdom or not; and if he succeed in making himself supreme king, then he

will be the best off who has best deserved his friendship. At present he has in no respect greater power than any of us; nay, indeed, he has less; as we have lands and kingdoms to rule over, and he has nothing, and we are equally entitled by the udal right to the kingdom as he is himself. Now, if we will be his men, give him our aid, allow him to take the highest dignity in the country, and stand by him with our strength, how should he not reward us well, and hold it in remembrance to our great advantage, if he be the honourable man I believe him to be, and all say he is? Therefore let us join the adventure, say I, and bind ourselves in friendship with him."

Then the others, one after the other, stood up and spoke; and the conclusion was, that the most of them determined to enter into a league with King Olaf. He promised them his perfect friendship, and that he would hold by and improve the country's laws and rights, if he became supreme king of Norway. This league was confirmed by oath.

CHAPTER XXXV.— *Olaf gets the Title of King from the Thing.*

Thereafter the kings summoned a Thing,* and there King Olaf set forth this determination to all the people, and his demand on the kingly power. He desires that the bondes should receive him as king; and promises, on the other hand, to allow

* The reference to a Thing appears to have been indispensable, notwithstanding the concurrence of the small kings.—L.

them to retain their ancient laws, and to defend the land from foreign masters and chiefs. On this point he spoke well, and long; and he got great praise for his speech. Then the kings rose and spoke, the one after the other, and supported his cause, and this message to the people. At last it came to this, that King Olaf was proclaimed king over the whole country, and the kingdom adjudged to him according to law in the Uplands [1014].

CHAPTER XXXVI.—*King Olaf Travels in the Uplands.*

King Olaf began immediately his progress through the country, appointing feasts before him wherever there were royal farms. First he travelled round in Hadaland, and then he proceeded north to Gudbrandsdal. And now it went as King Sigurd Syr had foretold, that people streamed to him from all quarters; and he did not appear to have need for half of them, for he had nearly 300 * men. But the entertainments bespoken did not half serve; for it had been the custom that kings went about in guest-quarters in the Uplands with 60 or 70 men only, and never with more than 100 † men. The king therefore hastened over the country, only stopping one night at the same place. When he came north to Dovrefield, he arranged his journey so that he came over the mountain and down upon the north side of it, and then came to Opdal, where he remained all night. Afterwards he proceeded through Opdal forest, and

* 360. † 120.

came out at Medaldal, where he proclaimed a Thing, and summoned the bondes to meet him at it. The king made a speech to the Thing, and asked the bondes to accept him as king; and promised, on his part, the laws and rights which King Olaf Trygveson had offered them. The bondes had no strength to make opposition to the king; so the result was that they received him as king, and confirmed it by oath: but they sent word to Orkadal and Skaun of all that they knew concerning Olaf's proceedings.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—*A Levy against Olaf in the Throndhjem Land.*

Einar Tambaskelfer had a farm and house at Husaby in Skaun; and now when he got news of Olaf's proceedings, he immediately split up a war-arrow, and sent it out as a token to the four quarters—north, south, east, west,—to call together all free and unfree men in full equipment of war: therewith the message, that they were to defend the land against King Olaf. The message-stick went to Orkadal, and thence to Gaulardal, where the whole war-force was to assemble.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—*King Olaf's Progress in Throndhjem.*

King Olaf proceeded with his men down into Orkadal, and advanced in peace and with all gentleness; but when he came to Griotar he met the assembled bondes, amounting to more than 700 * men.

* = 840.

Then the king arrayed his army, for he thought the bondes were to give battle. When the bondes saw this, they also began to put their men in order; but it went on very slowly, for they had not agreed beforehand who among them should be commander. Now when King Olaf saw there was confusion among the bondes, he sent to them Thorer Gudbrandson; and when he came he told them King Olaf did not want to fight them, but named twelve of the ablest men in their flock of people, who were desired to come to King Olaf. The bondes agreed to this; and the twelve men went over a rising ground which is there, and came to the place where the king's army stood in array. The king said to them, "Ye bondes have done well to give me an opportunity to speak with you, for now I will explain to you my errand here to the Throndhjem country. First I must tell you, what ye already must have heard, that Earl Hakon and I met in summer; and the issue of our meeting was, that he gave me the whole kingdom he possessed in the Throndhjem country, which, as ye know, consists of Orkadal, Gaulardal, Strind, and Eyna district. As a proof of this, I have here with me the very men who were present, and saw the earl's and my own hands given upon it, and heard the word and oath, and witnessed the agreement the earl made with me. Now I offer you peace and law, the same as King Olaf Trygveson offered before me."

The king spoke well, and long; and ended by proposing to the bondes two conditions—either to

go into his service and be subject to him, or to fight him. Thereupon the twelve bondes went back to their people, and told the issue of their errand, and considered with the people what they should resolve upon. Although they discussed the matter backwards and forwards for a while, they preferred at last to submit to the king; and it was confirmed by the oath of the bondes. The king now proceeded on his journey, and the bondes made feasts for him. The king then proceeded to the sea-coast, and got ships; and among others he got a long-ship of twenty benches of rowers from Gunnar of Gelmin; another ship of twenty benches he got from Lodin of Viggia; and three ships of twenty benches from the farm of Ongrum on the ness, which farm Earl Hakon had possessed, but a steward managed it for him, by name Bard White. The king had, besides, four or five boats; and with these vessels he went in all haste into the fiord of Throndhjem.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—*Of Earl Svein's Proceedings.*

Earl Svein was at that time far up in the Throndhjem fiord at Steinker,* which at that time was a merchant town, and was there preparing for the Yule festival [1015]. When Einar Tambaskelfer heard that the Orkadal people had submitted to King Olaf, he sent men to Earl Svein to bring him the tidings. They went first to Nidaros, and took a rowing-boat which

* Steinker is still a village at the bottom of the Beitstad fiord, at the mouth of the large river running into it from the great lake the Snasen Vand. No remains of the old town are to be seen.—L.

belonged to Einar, with which they went out into the fiord, and came one day late in the evening to Steinker, where they brought to the earl the news about all King Olaf's proceedings. The earl owned a longship, which was lying afloat and rigged just outside the town; and immediately, in the evening, he ordered all his movable goods, his people's clothes, and also meat and drink, as much as the vessel could carry, to be put on board, rowed immediately out in the night-time, and came with daybreak to Skarnsund.* There he saw King Olaf rowing in with his fleet into the fiord. The earl turned towards the land within Masarvik,† where there was a thick wood, and lay so near the rocks that the leaves and branches hung over the vessel. They cut down some large trees, which they laid over the quarter on the sea-side, so that the ship could not be seen for leaves, especially as it was scarcely clear daylight when the king came rowing past them. The weather was calm, and the king rowed in among the islands; and when the king's fleet was out of sight the earl rowed out of the fiord, and on to Frosta, where his kingdom lay, and there he landed.

CHAPTER XL.—*Earl Svein's and Einar's Consultations.*

Earl Svein sent men out to Gaulardal to his brother-in-law, Einar Tambaskelfer; and when Einar came

* This is the sound between Inderöen and the west side of the land at the head of Throndhjem fiord, dividing the Throndhjem gulf into two parts, that above this sound being called Beitstad fiord.—L.

† Now Mosvik.—L.

the earl told him how it had been with him and King Olaf, and that now he would assemble men to go out against King Olaf, and fight him.

Einar answers, "We should go to work cautiously, and find out what King Olaf intends doing; and not let him hear anything concerning us but that we are quiet. It may happen that if he hears nothing about our assembling people, he may sit quietly where he is in Steinker all the Yule; for there is plenty prepared for him for the Yule feast: but if he hears we are assembling men, he will set right out of the fiord with his vessels, and we shall not get hold of him." Einar's advice was taken; and the earl went to Stjoradal, into guest-quarters among the bondes.

When King Olaf came to Steinker he collected all the meat prepared for the Yule feast, and made it be put on board, procured some transport vessels, took meat and drink with him, and got ready to sail as fast as possible, and went out all the way to Nidaros. Here King Olaf Trygveson had laid the foundation of a merchant town, and had built a king's house; but before that Nidaros* was only a single house, as before related. When Earl Eirik came to the country, he applied all his attention to his house of Lade,† where his father had had his main residence, and he neglected the houses which Olaf had erected at the Nid; so that some were fallen down, and those which stood were scarcely habitable. King

* The present city of Throndhjem, of about 24,000 inhabitants. Nidaros is the mouth of the Nid, — the river-mouth at which it is situated.—L.

† Lade is a farm near Throndhjem, on the opposite side of the bay.—L.

Olaf went now with his ships up the Nid, made all the houses to be put in order directly that were still standing, and built anew those that had fallen down, and employed in this work a great many people. Then he had all the meat and drink brought on shore to the houses, and prepared to hold Yule there; so Earl Svein and Einar had to fall upon some other plan.

CHAPTER XLI.—*Of Sigvat the Skald.*

There was an Iceland man called Thord Sigvalda-skald, who had been long with Earl Sigvalde, and afterwards with the earl's brother, Thorkel the Tall; but after the earl's death Thord had become a merchant. He met King Olaf on his viking cruise in the west, and entered into his service, and followed him afterwards. He was with the king when the incidents above related took place. Thord had a son called Sigvat fostered in the house of Thorkel at Apavatn, in Iceland. When he was nearly a grown man he went out of the country with some merchants; and the ship came in autumn to the Throndhjem country, and the crew lodged in the hered (district). The same winter King Olaf came to Throndhjem, as just now related by us. Now when Sigvat heard that his father Thord was with the king, he went to him, and stayed a while with him. Sigvat was a good skald at an early age. He made a lay in honour of King Olaf, and asked the king to listen to it. The king said he did not want poems composed

about him, and said he did not understand the skald's craft. Then Sigvat sang :—

"Rider of dark-blue ocean's steeds !
Allow one skald to sing thy deeds ;
And listen to the song of one
Who can sing well, if any can.
For should the king despise all others,
And show no favour to my brothers,
Yet I may all men's favour claim,
Who sing still of our great king's fame."

King Olaf gave Sigvat as a reward for his verse * a gold ring that weighed half a mark, and Sigvat was made one of King Olaf's court-men. Then Sigvat sang :—

"I willingly receive this sword—
By land or sea, on shore, on board,
I trust that I shall ever be
Worthy the sword received from thee.
A faithful follower thou hast bound—
A generous master I have found ;
Master and servant both have made
Just what best suits them by this trade."

Earl Svein had, according to custom, taken one half of the harbour-dues † from the Iceland ship-traders about autumn [1014] ; for the Earls Eirik and Hakon had always taken one half of these and all other revenues in the Throndhjem country. Now when King Olaf came there, he sent his men to demand that half of the tax from the Iceland traders ;

* The reward of a skald was called Bragar-laun—the pay of Brage ; who, according to the Edda, was one of the Asa gods, and presided over poetry. Our English word *brag* seems derived from this origin, the meaning corresponding to the character of Brage.—L.

† A harbour or landing due was a revenue first collected by Harald Harfager from every Norwegian who went to Iceland. It was afterwards changed into a tax paid by every Icelander who came to Norway. It was called in the Old Norse *land-aurar* = land-dues. See also ch. 71.

and they went up to the king's house, and asked Sigvat to help them. He went to the king, and sang :—

"My prayer, I trust, will not be vain—
No gold by it have I to gain ;
All that the king himself here wins
Is not red gold, but a few skins.*
It is not right that these poor men
Their harbour-dues should pay again.
That they paid once I know is true ;
Remit, great king, what scarce is due."

CHAPTER XLII.—*Of Earl Svein.*

Earl Svein and Einar Tambaskelfer gathered a large armed force, with which they came by the upper road into Gaulardal, and so down to Nidaros, with nearly 2000† men. King Olaf's men were out upon the Gaular ridge, and had a guard on horseback. They became aware that a force was coming down the Gaulardal, and they brought word of it to the king about midnight. The king got up immediately, ordered the people to be wakened, and they went on board of the ships, bearing all their clothes and arms on board, and all that they could take with them, and then rowed out of the river. Then came the earl's men to the town at the same moment, took all the Christmas provision, and set fire to the houses. King Olaf went out of the fiord down to Orkadal, and there landed the men from their ships. From Orkadal they went up to the mountains, and over

* The harbour or anchorage dues were paid in skins, or other products of Iceland.—L.

† 2400.

the mountains eastwards into Gudbrandsdal. In the lines composed about Kleng Brusason,* it is said that Earl Eirik burned the town of Nidaros:—

"The king's half-finished hall,
Rafters, roof, and all,
Is burned down by the river's side;
The flame spreads o'er the city wide."

CHAPTER XLIII.—*Of King Olaf.*

King Olaf went southwards through Gudbrandsdal, and thence out to Hedemark. In the depth of winter [1015] he went about in guest-quarters; but when spring returned he collected men, and went to Viken. He had with him many people from Hedemark, whom the kings had given him; and also many powerful people from among the bondes joined him, among whom Ketil Kalf from Ringunes. He had also people from Raumarike. His stepfather, Sigurd Syr, gave him the help also of a great body of men. They went down from thence to the coast, and made ready to put to sea from Viken. The fleet, which was manned with many fine fellows, went out then to Tunsberg.

CHAPTER XLIV.—*Of Earl Svein's Forces.*

After Yule [1015] Earl Svein gathers all the men of the Throndhjem country, proclaims a levy for an expedition, and fits out ships. At that time there were in the Throndhjem country a great number of

* The lines are composed by the skald Thord Siarekson.

lendermen; and many of them were so powerful and well-born, that they descended from earls, or even from the royal race, which in a short course of generations reckoned to Harald Harfager, and they were also very rich. These lendermen* were of great help to the kings or earls who ruled the land; for it was as if the lenderman had the bonde-people of each district in his power. Earl Svein being a good friend of the lendermen, it was easy for him to collect people. His brother-in-law, Einar Tamba-skelfer, was on his side, and with him many other lendermen; and among them many, both lendermen and bondes, who the winter before had taken the oath of fidelity to King Olaf. When they were ready for sea they went directly out of the fiord, steering south along the land, and drawing men from every district. When they came farther south, abreast of Rogaland, Erling Skialgson came to meet them, with many people and many lendermen with him. Now they steered eastward with their whole fleet to Viken, and Earl Svein ran in there towards the end of Easter. The earl steered his fleet to Grenmar, and ran into Nesiar [1015].

* The lendermen appear to have been sheriffs for collecting the scat and other revenues of the kings, and to have held the function in feu, paying for it to the king a proportion of the income of the district. The fines due to the king for misdemeanours, murders, &c., must have come through them into the royal coffers; for we find the appointment of new lendermen for every district the first act of every king on acquiring a part of the country. It is literally men having a *lend;* and the name includes those who held in *lehn* (or loan) the land, land-tax, or other revenues from the king, for a certain fixed payment.—L.

CHAPTER XLV.—*King Olaf's Forces.*

King Olaf steered his fleet out from Viken, until the two fleets were not far from each other, and they got news of each other the Saturday * before Palm Sunday. King Olaf himself had a ship called the Carl's Head,† on the bow of which a king's head was carved out, and he himself had carved it. This head was used long after in Norway on ships which kings steered themselves.

CHAPTER XLVI.—*King Olaf's Speech.*

As soon as day dawned on Sunday morning, King Olaf got up, put on his clothes, went to the land, and ordered to sound the signal for the whole army to come on shore. Then he made a speech to the troops, and told the whole assembly that he had heard there was but a short distance between them and Earl Svein. "Now," said he, "we shall make ready; for it can be but a short time until we meet. Let the people arm, and every man be at the post that has been appointed him, so that all may be ready when I order the signal to sound for casting off from the land.‡ Then let us row off at once; and so that none go on before the rest of the ships, and none lag

* Consequently April 3.

† The head probably of Charlemagne, whose name was held in great veneration. King Olaf's son Magnus was called after Charlemagne.—L.

‡ Signals by call of trumpet, or war-horn, or loor, appear to have been well understood by all. We read of the trumpet-call to arm, to attack, to advance, to retreat, to land; and also to a Court Thing, a House

behind, when I row out of the harbour: for we cannot tell if we shall find the earl where he was lying, or if he has come out to meet us. When we do meet, and the battle begins, let people be alert to bring all our ships in close order, and ready to bind them together. Let us spare ourselves in the beginning, and take care of our weapons, that we do not cast them into the sea, or shoot them away in the air to no purpose. But when the fight becomes hot, and the ships are bound together, then let each man show what is in him of manly spirit."

CHAPTER XLVII.—*Of the Battle at Nesiar.*

King Olaf had in his ship 100* men armed in coats of ring-mail, and in foreign helmets. The most of his men had white shields, on which the holy cross was gilt; but some had painted it in blue or red. He had also had the cross painted in front on all the helmets, in a pale colour. He had a white banner on which was a serpent figured. He ordered a mass to be read before him, went on board ship, and ordered his people to refresh themselves with meat and drink. He then ordered the war-horns to sound to battle, to leave the harbour, and row off to seek the earl. Now when they came to

Thing, a General Thing. The instrument now in use in Norway among the peasants for calling across valleys or rivers, or to their comrades or servants, in situations, so common in mountain-districts, in which the distance through the air is small, yet the labour of going between great, is the bark of the birch-tree rolled off, and the pieces bound together so as to form a tube of six or eight feet in length. But the Northmen appear to have had instruments of metal, and regular trumpeters.—L.

* 120.

the harbour where the earl had lain, the earl's men were armed, and beginning to row out of the harbour; but when they saw the king's fleet coming they began to bind the ships together, to set up their banners, and to make ready for the fight. When King Olaf saw this he hastened the rowing, laid his ship alongside the earl's, and the battle began. So says Sigvat the skald :—

"Boldly the king did then pursue
Earl Svein, nor let him out of view.
The blood ran down the reindeer's flank *
Of each sea-king—his vessel's plank.
Nor did the earl's stout warriors spare
In battle-brunt the sword and spear.
Earl Svein his ships of war pushed on,
And lashed their stout stems one to one."

It is said that King Olaf brought his ships into battle while Svein was still lying in the harbour. Sigvat the skald was himself in the fight; and in summer, just after the battle, he composed a lay, which is called the Nesiar Song, in which he tells particularly the circumstances :—

"In the fierce fight 'tis known how near
The scorner of the ice-cold spear
Laid the Charles' head † the earl on board,
All eastward of the Agder fiord."

Then was the conflict exceedingly sharp, and it was long before it could be seen how it was to go in the end. Many fell on both sides, and many were the wounded. So says Sigvat :—

"No urging did the earl require,
'Midst spear and sword—the battle's fire;

* The ships are called the reindeer of the sea-kings by the skalds.—L.
† The king's ship had a head of Charlemagne.—L.

No urging did the brave king need
The ravens in this shield-storm to feed.
Of limb-lopping enough was there,
And ghastly wounds of sword and spear.
Never, I think, was rougher play
Than both the armies had that day."

The earl had most men, but the king had a chosen crew in his ship, who had followed him in all his wars; and, besides, they were so excellently equipped, as before related, that each man had a coat of ring-mail,* so that he could not be wounded. So says Sigvat:—

"Our lads, broad-shouldered, tall, and hale,
Drew on their cold shirts of ring-mail.
Soon sword on sword was shrilly ringing,
And in the air the spears were singing.
Under our helms we hid our hair,
For thick flew arrows through the air.
Right glad was I our gallant crew,
Steel-clad from head to foot, to view."

CHAPTER XLVIII.—*Earl Svein's Flight.*

When the men began to fall on board the earl's ships, and many appeared wounded, so that the sides of the vessels were but thinly beset with men, the crew of King Olaf prepared to board. Their banner was brought up to the ship that was nearest the earl's, and the king himself followed the banner. So says Sigvat:—

"'On with the king!' his banner's waving:
'On with the king!' the spears he's braving!

* Ring-mail was a kind of network of metal rings sewed upon a leathern or woollen shirt, like a frock or blouse; or it consisted also of rings of metal linked together. It did not impede the movement of the limbs so much as plate-armour, and seems to have been less costly orless esteemed by the great than plate-armour. —L.

'On, steel-clad men! and storm the deck,
Slippery with blood and strewed with wreck.
A different work ye have to share,
His banner in war-storm to bear,
From your fair girl's, who round the hall
Brings the full mead-bowl to us all.'"

Now was the severest fighting. Many of Svein's men fell, and some sprang overboard. So says Sigvat:—

"Into the ship our brave lads spring,—
On shield and helm their red blades ring;
The air resounds with stroke on stroke,—
The shields are cleft, the helms are broke.
The wounded bonde o'er the side
Falls shrieking in the blood-stained tide—
The deck is cleared with wild uproar—
The dead crew float about the shore."

And also these lines:—

"The shields we brought from home were white,
Now they are red-stained in the fight:
This work was fit for those who wore
Ringed coats-of-mail their breasts before.
Where the foe blunted the best sword
I saw our young king climb on board.
He stormed the first; we followed him—
The war-birds now in blood may swim."

Now defeat began to come down upon the earl's men. The king's men pressed upon the earl's ship and entered it; but when the earl saw how it was going, he called out to his forecastle-men to cut the cables and cast the ship loose, which they did. Then the king's men threw grapplings over the timber heads of the ship, and so held her fast to their own; but the earl ordered the timber heads to be cut away, which was done. So says Sigvat:—

"The earl, his noble ship to save,
To cut the posts loud order gave.

The ship escaped: our greedy eyes
Had looked on her as a clear prize.
The earl escaped; but ere he fled
We feasted Odin's fowls with dead;—
With many a goodly corpse that floated
Round our ship's stern his birds were bloated."

Einar Tambaskelfer had laid his ship right alongside the earl's. They threw an anchor over the bows of the earl's ship, and thus towed her away, and they slipped out of the fiord together. Thereafter the whole of the earl's fleet took to flight, and rowed out of the fiord. The skald Berse Torfason was on the forecastle of the earl's ship; and as it was gliding past the king's fleet, King Olaf called out to him—for he knew Berse, who was distinguished as a remarkably handsome man, always well equipped in clothes and arms—"Farewell, Berse!" He replied, "Farewell, king!" So says Berse himself, in a poem he composed when he fell into King Olaf's power, and was laid in prison and in fetters on board a ship:—

"Olaf the Brave
A 'farewell' gave,
(No time was there to parley long,)
To me who knows the art of song.
The skald was fain
'Farewell' again
In the same terms back to send—
The rule in arms to foe or friend.
Earl Svein's distress
I well can guess,
When flight he was compelled to take:
His fortunes I will ne'er forsake.
Though I lie here
In chains a year,
In thy great vessel all forlorn,
To crouch to thee I still will scorn:

I still will say,
No milder sway
Than from thy foe this land e'er knew:
To him, my early friend, I'm true."

CHAPTER XLIX.—*Earl Svein Leaves the Country.*

Now some of the earl's men fled up the country, some surrendered at discretion; but Svein and his followers rowed out of the fiord, and the chiefs laid their vessels together to talk with each other, for the earl wanted counsel from his lendermen. Erling Skialgson advised that they should sail north, collect people, and fight King Olaf again; but as they had lost many people, the most were of opinion that the earl should leave the country, and repair to his brother-in-law the Swedish King,* and strengthen himself there with men. Einar Tambaskelfer approved also of that advice, as they had no power to hold battle against Olaf. So they discharged their fleet. The earl sailed across Folden,† and with him Einar Tambaskelfer. Erling Skialgson again, and likewise many other lendermen who would not abandon their udal possessions, went north to their homes; and Erling had many people that summer about him.

CHAPTER L.—*King Olaf's and Sigurd's Consultation.*

When King Olaf and his men saw that the earl had gathered his ships together, Sigurd Syr was in

* Earl Svein was married to the Swedish King Olaf's sister Holmfrid.
† Christiania fiord is called Folden, or Felden fiord.—L.

haste for pursuing the earl, and letting steel decide their cause. But King Olaf replies, that he would first see what the earl intended doing,—whether he would keep his force together or discharge his fleet. Sigurd Syr said, "It is for thee, king, to command; but," he adds, "I fear, from thy disposition and wilfulness, that thou wilt some day be betrayed by trusting to those great people, for they are accustomed of old to bid defiance to their sovereigns." There was no attack made, for it was soon seen that the earl's fleet was dispersing. Then King Olaf ransacked the slain, and remained there some days to divide the booty. At that time Sigvat made these verses:—

"The tale I tell is true:
To their homes returned but few
Of Svein's men, who came to meet
King Olaf's gallant fleet.
From the North these warmen came
To try the bloody game,—
On the waves their corpses borne
Show the game that Sunday morn.
The Throndhjem girls so fair
Their jeers, I think, will spare,
For the king's force was but small
That emptied Throndhjem's hall.
But if they will have their jeer,
They may ask their sweethearts dear,
Why they have returned shorn
Who went to shear that Sunday morn."

And also these:—

"Now will the king's power rise,
For the Upland men still prize
The king who o'er the sea
Steers to bloody victory.
Earl Svein! thou now wilt know
That our lads can make blood flow—
That the Hedemarkers hale
Can do more than tap good ale."

King Olaf gave his stepfather King Sigurd Syr, and the other chiefs who had assisted him, handsome presents at parting. He gave Ketil of Ringunes a yacht of fifteen benches of rowers, which Ketil brought up the Raum * river and into the Mjosen lake.

CHAPTER LI.—*Of King Olaf.*

King Olaf sent spies out to trace the earl's doings [1015]; and when he found that the earl had left the country he sailed out west, and to Viken, where many people came to him. At the Thing there he was taken as king, and so he proceeded all the way to the Naze; and when he heard that Erling Skialgson had gathered a large force, he did not tarry in North Agder, but sailed with a steady fair wind to Throndhjem country; for there it appeared to him was the greatest strength of the land, if he could subdue it for himself while the earl was abroad. When Olaf came to Throndhjem there was no opposition, and he was elected there to be king. In harvest [1015] he took his seat in the town of Nidaros, and collected the needful winter provision [1016]. He built a king's house, and raised Clement's church on the spot on which it now stands. He parcelled out building ground, which he gave to bondes, merchants, or others who he thought would build. There he sat down, with many men-at-arms around him; for he put no great confidence in the Throndhjem people, if the earl should return to the country. The people

* Glommen.

of the interior of the Throndhjem country showed this clearly, for he got no land-scat from them.

CHAPTER LII.—*Plan of Earl Svein and the Swedish King.*

Earl Svein went first to Svithiod, to his brother-in-law Olaf the Swedish king, told him all that had happened between him and Olaf the Thick, and asked his advice about what he should now undertake. The king said that the earl should stay with him if he liked, and get such a portion of his kingdom to rule over as should seem to him sufficient; "or otherwise," says he, "I will give thee help of forces to conquer the country again from Olaf." The earl chose the latter; for all those among his men who had great possessions in Norway, which was the case with many who were with him, were anxious to get back; and in the council they held about this, it was resolved that in winter they should take the land-way over Helsingialand and Jamtaland, and so down into the Throndhjem land; for the earl reckoned most upon the faithful help and strength of the Throndhjem people of the interior as soon as he should appear there. In the meantime, however, it was determined to take a cruise in summer in the Baltic to gather property.

CHAPTER LIII.—*Earl Svein's Death.*

Earl Svein went eastward with his forces to Russia, and passed the summer [1015] in marauding there; but on the approach of autumn returned with

his ships to Svithiod. There he fell into a sickness, which proved fatal. After the earl's death some of the people who had followed him remained in Svithiod; others went to Helsingialand, thence to Jamtaland, and so from the east over the dividing ridge of the country to the Throndhjem district, where they told all that had happened upon their journey: and thus the truth of Earl Svein's death was known [1016].

CHAPTER LIV.—*Of the Throndhjem People.*

Einar Tambaskelfer, and the people who had followed him, went in winter to the Swedish king, and were received in a friendly manner. There were also among them many who had followed the earl. The Swedish king took it much amiss that Olaf the Thick had set himself down in his scat-lands, and driven the earl out of them, and therefore he threatened the king with his heaviest vengeance when opportunity offered. He said that Olaf ought not to have had the presumption to take the dominions which the earl had held of him; and all the Swedish king's men agreed with him. But the Throndhjem people, when they heard for certain that the earl was dead, and could not be expected back to Norway, turned all to obedience to King Olaf. Many came from the interior of the Throndhjem country, and became King Olaf's men; others sent word and tokens that they would serve him. Then, in autumn, he went into the interior of

Throndhjem, and held Things with the bondes, and was received as king in each district. He returned to Nidaros, and brought there all the king's scat and revenue, and had his winter-seat provided there [1016].

CHAPTER LV.—*Of King Olaf's Household.*

King Olaf built a king's house in Nidaros, and in it was a large room for his court, with doors at both ends. The king's high-seat was in the middle of the room; and within sat his court-bishop, Grimkel, and next him his other priests; without them sat his counsellors; and in the other high-seat opposite to the king sat his marshal, Biorn, and next to him his pursuivants.* When people of importance came to him, they also had a seat of honour. The ale was drunk by the fire-light. He divided the service among his men after the fashion of other kings. He had in his house sixty court-men and thirty pursuivants; and to them he gave pay and certain regulations. He had also thirty house-servants to do the needful work about the house, and procure what was required. He had, besides, many slaves. At the house were many outbuildings, in which the court-men slept. There was also a large room, in which the king held his court-meetings.

* Gestir (pl.) appear to have been inferior in rank to the court-men, thing-men, or men-at-arms of the king's guard; and to have been employed in civil affairs, as gathering penalties, inflicting punishments, and collecting provisions.—L.

CHAPTER LVI.—*Of King Olaf's Habits.*

It was King Olaf's custom to rise betimes in the morning, put on his clothes, wash his hands, and then go to the church and hear the matins and morning mass. Thereafter he went to the Thing-meeting, to bring people to agreement with each other, or to talk of one or the other matter that appeared to him necessary. He invited to him great and small who were known to be men of understanding. He often made them recite to him the laws which Hakon Athelstan's foster-son had made for Throndhjem; and after considering them with those men of understanding, he ordered laws adding to or taking from those established before. But Christian privileges he settled according to the advice of Bishop Grimkel and other learned priests; and bent his whole mind to uprooting heathenism, and old customs which he thought contrary to Christianity. And he succeeded so far that the bondes accepted of the laws which the king proposed. So says Sigvat:—

> "The king, who at the helm guides
> His warlike ship through clashing tides,
> Now gives one law for all the land—
> A heavenly law, which long will stand."

King Olaf was a good and very gentle man, of little speech, and open-handed although greedy of money. Sigvat the skald, as before related, was in King Olaf's house, and several Iceland men. The king asked particularly how Christianity was observed

in Iceland, and it appeared to him to be very far from what it ought to be; for, as to observing Christian practices, it was told the king that it was permitted there to eat horse-flesh, to expose infants as heathens do, besides many other things contrary to Christianity. They also told the king about many principal men who were then in Iceland. Skapte Thorodson * was then the lagman of the country. He inquired also of those who were best acquainted with it about the state of people in other distant countries; and his inquiries turned principally on how Christianity was observed in the Orkney, Shetland, and Farey Islands: and, as far as he could learn, it was far from being as he could have wished. Such conversation was usually carried on by him; or else he spoke about the laws and rights of the country.

CHAPTER LVII.—*Of the Swedish King Olaf's Messengers, and his Bailiff Asgaut's Death.*

The same winter [1016] came messengers from the Swedish king, Olaf the Swede, out of Svithiod; and their leaders were two brothers, Thorgaut Skarde and Asgaut the bailiff; and they had twenty-four men with them. When they came from the eastward, over the ridge of the country down into Veradal, they summoned a Thing of the bondes, talked to them, and demanded of them scat and duties upon account of the king of Sweden. But the bondes, after consulting with each other, determined only to pay the

* Skapte Thorodson was lagman (that is, speaker of laws) in Iceland from 1004 to 1030.

scat which the Swedish king required in so far as King Olaf required none upon his account, but refused to pay scat to both. The messengers proceeded farther down the valley; but received at every Thing they held the same answer, and no money. They went forward to Skaun, held a Thing there, and demanded scat; but it went there as before. Then they came to Stjoradal, and summoned a Thing, but the bondes would not come to it. Now the messengers saw that their business was a failure; and Thorgaut proposed that they should turn about, and go eastward again. "I do not think," says Asgaut, "that we have performed the king's errand unless we go to King Olaf the Thick, since the bondes refer the matter to him." He was their commander; so they proceeded to the town (Nidaros), and took lodging there. The day after they presented themselves to the king, just as he was seated at table, saluted him, and said they came with a message of the Swedish king. The king told them to come to him next day. Next day the king, having heard mass, went to his Thing-house, ordered the messengers of the Swedish king to be called, and told them to produce their message. Then Thorgaut spoke, and told first what his errand was, and next how the Throndhjem people of the interior had replied to it; and asked the king's decision on the business, that they might know what result their errand there was to have. The king answers, "While the earls ruled over the country, it was not to be wondered at if the country people thought themselves bound to obey

them, as they were at least of the royal race of the kingdom. But it would have been more just if those earls had given assistance and service to the kings who had a right to the country, rather than to foreign kings, or to stir up opposition to their lawful kings, depriving them of their land and kingdom. With regard to Olaf the Swede, who calls himself entitled to the kingdom of Norway, I, who in fact am so entitled, can see no ground for his claim; but well remember the skaith and damage we have suffered from him and his relations."

Then says Asgaut, "It is not wonderful that thou art called Olaf the Thick, seeing thou answerest so haughtily to such a prince's message, and canst not see clearly how heavy the king's wrath will be for thee to support, as many have experienced who had greater strength than thou appearest to have. But if thou wishest to keep hold of thy kingdom, it will be best for thee to come to the king, and be his man; and we shall beg him to give thee this kingdom in fief under him."

The king replies with all gentleness, "I will give thee an advice, Asgaut, in return. Go back to the east again to thy king, and tell him that early in spring I will make myself ready, and will proceed eastward to the ancient frontier that divided formerly the kingdom of the kings of Norway from Sweden. There he may come if he likes, that we may conclude a peace with each other; and each of us will retain the kingdom to which he is born."

Now the messengers turned back to their lodging,

and prepared for their departure, and the king went to table. The messengers came back soon after to the king's house; but the doorkeepers saw it, and reported it to the king, who told them not to let the messengers in. "I will not speak with them," said he. Then the messengers went off, and Thorgaut said he would now return home with his men; but Asgaut insisted still that he would go forward with the king's errand: so they separated. Thorgaut proceeded accordingly through Strind; but Asgaut went into Gaulardal and Orkadal, and intended proceeding southwards to More, to deliver his king's message. When King Olaf came to the knowledge of this he sent out his pursuivants after them, who found them at the ness in Stein, bound their hands behind their backs, and led them down to the point called Gaularas, where they raised a gallows, and hanged them so that they could be seen by those who travelled the usual sea-way out of the fiord. Thorgaut heard this news before he had travelled far on his way home through the Throndhjem country; and he hastened on his journey until he came to the Swedish king, and told him how it had gone with them. The king was highly enraged when he heard the account of it; and he had no lack of high words.

CHAPTER LVIII.—*King Olaf and Erling Skialgson Reconciled.*

The spring thereafter [1016] King Olaf Haraldson calls out an army from the Throndhjem land, and

makes ready to proceed eastward. Some of the Iceland traders were then ready to sail from Norway. With them King Olaf sent word and token to Hialte Skeggiason, and summoned him to come to him; and at the same time sent a verbal message to Skapte the lagman, and other men who principally took part in the lawgiving of Iceland, to take out of the law whatever appeared contrary to Christianity. He sent, besides, a message of friendship to the people in general. The king then proceeded southwards himself along the coast, stopping at every district, and holding Things with the bondes; and in each Thing he ordered the Christian law to be read, together with the message of salvation thereunto belonging, and with which many ill customs and much heathenism were swept away at once among the common people: for the earls had kept well the old laws and rights of the country; but with respect to keeping Christianity, they had allowed every man to do as he liked. It was thus come so far that the people were baptized in the most places on the sea-coast, but the most of them were ignorant of Christian law. In the upper ends of the valleys, and in the habitations among the mountains, the greater part of the people were heathen; for when the common man is left to himself, the faith he has been taught in his childhood is that which has the strongest hold over his inclination. But the king threatened the most violent proceedings against great or small, who, after the king's message, would not adopt Christianity. In the meantime Olaf was proclaimed king

in every Law Thing in the country, and no man spoke against him. While he lay in Karmtsund messengers went between him and Erling Skialgson, who endeavoured to make peace between them; and the meeting was appointed in Whitings Isle.* When they met they spoke with each other about agreement together; but Erling found something else than he expected in the conversation: for when he insisted on having all the fiefs which Olaf Trygveson, and afterwards the Earls Svein and Hakon, had given him, and on that condition would be his man and dutiful friend, the king answered, "It appears to me, Erling, that it would be no bad bargain for thee to get as great fiefs from me for thy aid and friendship as thou hadst from Earl Eirik, a man who had done thee the greatest injury by the bloodshed of thy men; but even if I let thee remain the greatest lenderman in Norway, I will bestow my fiefs according to my own will, and not act as if ye lendermen had udal right to my ancestors' heritage, and I was obliged to buy your services with manifold rewards." Erling had no disposition to sue for even the smallest thing; and he saw that the king was not easily dealt with. He saw also that he had only two conditions before him: the one was to make no agreement with the king, and stand by the consequences; the other, to leave it entirely to the king's pleasure. Although it was much against his inclination, he chose the latter, and merely said to the king, "The service will be the most useful to thee

* Hvitingsey in Snorre.

which I give with a free will." And thus their conference ended. Erling's relations and friends came to him afterwards, and advised him to give way, and proceed with more prudence and less pride. "Thou wilt still," they said, "be the most important and most respected lenderman in Norway, both on account of thy own and thy relations' abilities and great wealth." Erling found that this was prudent advice, and that they who gave it did so with a good intention, and he followed it accordingly. Erling went into the king's service on such conditions as the king himself should determine and please. Thereafter they separated in some shape reconciled, and Olaf went his way eastward along the coast [1016].

Chapter LIX.—*Eilif of Gautland's Murder.*

As soon as it was reported that Olaf had come to Viken, the Danes who had offices under the Danish king set off for Denmark, without waiting for King Olaf. But King Olaf sailed in along Viken, holding Things with the bondes. All the people of the country submitted to him, and thereafter he took all the king's taxes, and remained the summer [1016] in Viken. He then sailed east from Tunsberg across the fiord, and all the way east to Svinasund. There the Swedish king's dominions begin, and he had set officers over this country; namely, Eilif Gautske over the north part, and Hroe Skialge over the east part, all the way to the Gaut river. Hroe had family friends on both sides of the river, and also great farms

on Hising Island, and was besides a mighty and very rich man. Eilif was also of great family, and very wealthy. Now when King Olaf came to Ranrike he summoned the people to a Thing, and all who dwelt on the sea-coast or in the out-islands came to him. Now when the Thing was seated the king's marshal, Biorn, held a speech to them, in which he told the bondes to receive Olaf as their king, in the same way as had been done in all other parts of Norway. Then stood up a bold bonde, by name Bryniolf Ulfalde, and said, "We bondes know where the division-boundaries between the Norway and Danish and Swedish kings' lands have stood by rights in old times; namely, that the Gaut river divided their lands between the Vener lake and the sea; but towards the north the forests until Eid forest, and from thence the ridge of the country all north to Finmark. We know, also, that by turns they have made inroads upon each other's territories, and that the Swedes have long had power all the way to Svinasund. But, sooth to say, I know that it is the inclination of many rather to serve the king of Norway, but they dare not; for the Swedish king's dominions surround us, both eastward, southward, and also up the country; and besides, it may be expected that the king of Norway must soon go to the north, where the strength of his kingdom lies, and then we have no power to withstand the Gautlanders. Now it is for the king to give us good counsel, for we have great desire to be his men." After the Thing, in the evening, Bryniolf was in the king's

tent, and the day after likewise, and they had much private conversation together. Then the king proceeded eastwards along Viken. Now when Eilif heard of his arrival, he sent out spies to discover what he was about; but he himself, with thirty men, kept himself high up in the habitations among the hills, where he had gathered together bondes. Many of the bondes came to King Olaf, but some sent friendly messages to him. People went between King Olaf and Eilif, and they entreated each separately to hold a Thing-meeting between themselves, and make peace in one way or another. They told Eilif that they might expect violent treatment from King Olaf if they opposed his orders; but promised Eilif he should not want men. It was determined that they should come down from the high country, and hold a Thing with the bondes and the king. King Olaf thereupon sent the chief of his pursuivants, Thorer Lange, with six men, to Bryniolf. They were equipped with their coats-of-mail under their cloaks, and their hats over their helmets. The following day the bondes came in crowds down with Eilif; and in his suite was Bryniolf, and with him Thorer. The king laid his ships close to a rocky knoll that stuck out into the sea, and upon it the king went with his people, and sat down. Below was a flat field, on which the bondes' force was; but Eilif's men were drawn up, forming a shield-fence before him. Biorn the marshal spoke long and cleverly upon the king's account, and when he sat down Eilif arose to speak; but at the same moment Thorer

Lange rose, drew his sword, and struck Eilif on the neck, so that his head flew off. Then the whole bonde-force started up; but the Gautland men set off in full flight, and Thorer with his people killed several of them. Now when the crowd was settled again, and the noise over, the king stood up, and told the bondes to seat themselves. They did so, and then much was spoken. The end of it was, that they submitted to the king, and promised fidelity to him; and he, on the other hand, promised not to desert them, but to remain at hand until the discord between him and the Swedish Olaf was settled in one way or other. King Olaf then brought the whole northern district under his power, and went in summer eastward as far as the Gaut river, and got all the king's scat among the islands. But when summer [1016] was drawing towards an end he returned north to Viken, and sailed up the Raum river to a waterfall called Sarp. On the north side of the fall, a point of land juts out into the river. There the king ordered a rampart to be built right across the ness, of stone, turf, and wood, and a ditch to be dug in front of it; so that it was a large earthen fort or burgh, which he made a merchant town of. He had a king's house put up, and ordered the building of Mary church. He also laid out plans for other houses, and got people to build on them. In harvest [1016] he let everything be gathered there that was useful for his winter residence [1017], and sat there with a great many people, and the rest he quartered in the neighbouring

districts. The king prohibited all exports from Viken to Gautland of herrings and salt, which the Gautland people could ill do without. This year the king held a great Yule feast, to which he invited many great bondes.

CHAPTER LX.—*Here Begins the History of Eyvind Urarhorn.*

There was a man called Eyvind Urarhorn, who was a great man, of high birth, who had his descent from the East Agder country. Every summer he went out on a viking cruise, sometimes to the West sea, sometimes to the Baltic, sometimes south to Flanders, and had a well-armed cutter (snekkia) of twenty benches of rowers. He had been also at Nesiar, and given his aid to the king; and when they separated the king promised him his favour, and Eyvind, again, promised to come to the king's aid whenever he was required. This winter [1017] Eyvind was at the Yule feast of the king, and received goodly gifts from him. Bryniolf Ulfalde was also with the king, and he received a Yule present from the king of a gold-mounted sword, and also a farm called Vettaland, which is a very large head-farm of the district. Bryniolf composed a song about these gifts, of which the refrain was—

> "The song-famed hero to my hand
> Gave a good sword, and Vettaland."

The king afterwards gave him the title of Lender-man, and Bryniolf was ever after the king's greatest friend.

CHAPTER LXI.—*Thrand White's Murder.*

This winter [1017] Thrand White from Throndhjem went east to Jamtaland, to take up scat upon account of King Olaf. But when he had collected the scat he was surprised by men of the Swedish king, who killed him and his men, twelve in all, and brought the scat to the Swedish king. King Olaf was very ill-pleased when he heard this news.

CHAPTER LXII.—*Christianity Proclaimed in Viken.*

King Olaf made Christian law to be proclaimed in Viken, in the same way as in the North country. It succeeded well, because the people of Viken were better acquainted with the Christian customs than the people in the north; for, both winter and summer, there were many merchants in Viken, both Danish and Saxon. The people of Viken, also, had much trading intercourse with England, and Saxony, and Flanders, and Denmark; and some had been on viking expeditions, and had had their winter abode in Christian lands.

CHAPTER LXIII.—*Hroe's Fall.*

About spring-time [1017] King Olaf sent a message that Eyvind Urarhorn should come to him; and they spake together in private for a long time. Thereafter Eyvind made himself ready for a viking cruise. He sailed south towards Viken, and brought up at

the Eikrey Isles without Hising Isle. There he heard that Hroe Skialge had gone northwards towards Ordost, and had there made a levy of men and goods on account of the Swedish king, and was expected from the north. Eyvind rowed in by Haugasund, and Hroe came rowing from the north, and they met in the sound and fought. Hroe fell there, with nearly thirty men; and Eyvind took all the goods Hroe had with him. Eyvind then proceeded to the Baltic, and was all summer on a viking cruise.

Chapter LXIV.—*Fall of Gudleik and of Thorgaut Skarde.*

There was a man called Gudleik Gerske,* who came originally from Agder. He was a great merchant, who went far and wide by sea, was very rich, and drove a trade with various countries. He often went east to Gardarike (Russia), and therefore was called Gudleik Gerske (the Russian). This spring [1017] Gudleik fitted out his ship, and intended to go east in summer to Russia. King Olaf sent a message to him that he wanted to speak to him; and when Gudleik came to the king he told him he would go in partnership with him, and told him to purchase some costly articles which were difficult to be had in this country. Gudleik said that it should be according to the king's desire. The king ordered as much money to be delivered to Gudleik as he thought sufficient, and then Gudleik set out for the Baltic. They lay in a sound in Gotland; and there

* Gerske—viz., from Gardarike—the Russian.—L.

it happened, as it often does, that people cannot keep their own secrets, and the people of the country came to know that in this ship was Olaf the Thick's partner. Gudleik went in summer eastwards to Novgorod, where he bought fine and costly clothes, which he intended for the king as a state dress; and also precious furs, and remarkably splendid table utensils. In autumn [1017], as Gudleik was returning from the east, he met a contrary wind, and lay for a long time at the island Eyland.* There came Thorgaut Skarde, who in autumn had heard of Gudleik's course, in a long-ship against him, and gave him battle. They fought long, and Gudleik and his people defended themselves for a long time; but the numbers against them were great, and Gudleik and many of his ship's crew fell, and a great many of them were wounded. Thorgaut took all their goods, and King Olaf's, and he and his comrades divided the booty among them equally; but he said the Swedish king ought to have the precious articles of King Olaf, as these, he said, should be considered as part of the scat due to him from Norway. Thereafter Thorgaut proceeded east to Svithiod. These tidings were soon known; and as Eyvind Urarhorn came soon after to Eyland, he heard the news, and sailed east after Thorgaut and his troop, and overtook them among the Swedish isles on the coast, and gave battle. There Thorgaut and the most of his men were killed, and the rest sprang overboard. Eyvind took all the goods and

* Eyland, now called Oland.

all the costly articles of King Olaf which they had captured from Gudleik, and went with these back to Norway in autumn, and delivered to King Olaf his precious wares. The king thanked him in the most friendly way for his proceeding, and promised him anew his favour and friendship. At this time Olaf had been three years king over Norway [1015–1017].

CHAPTER LXV.—*Meeting of King Olaf and Earl Ragnvald.*

The same summer [1017] King Olaf ordered a levy, and went out eastwards to the Gaut river, where he lay great part of the summer. Messages were passing between King Olaf, Earl Ragnvald, and the earl's wife, Ingibjorg, the daughter of Trygve. She was very zealous about giving King Olaf of Norway every kind of help, and made it a matter of her deepest interest. For this there were two causes. She had a great friendship for King Olaf; and also she could never forget that the Swedish king had been one at the death of her brother, Olaf Trygveson; and also that he, on that account only, had any pretence to rule over Norway. The earl, by her persuasion, turned much towards friendship with King Olaf; and it proceeded so far that the earl and the king appointed a meeting, and met at the Gaut river. They talked together of many things, but especially of the Norwegian and Swedish kings' relations with each other; both agreeing, as was the truth also, that it was the greatest loss, both to the people of Viken and of Gautland, that there was no peace for trade between

the two countries; and at last both agreed upon a peace, and still-stand of arms between them until next summer: and they parted with mutual gifts and friendly speeches.

CHAPTER LXVI.—*King Olaf the Swede; his Dislike to King Olaf Haraldson.*

The king thereupon returned north to Viken, and had all the royal revenues up to the Gaut river; and all the people of the country there had submitted to him. King Olaf the Swede had so great a hatred of Olaf Haraldson, that no man dared to call him by his right name in the king's hearing. They called him the thick man; and never named him without some hard by-name.

CHAPTER LXVII.—*Beginning of the Account of their Reconciliation.*

The bondes in Viken spoke with each other about there being nothing for it but that the kings should make peace and a league with each other, and insisted upon it that they were badly used by the kings going to war; but nobody was so bold as to bring these murmurs before the king. At last they begged Biorn the marshal to bring this matter before the king, and entreat him to send messengers to the Swedish king to offer peace on his side. Biorn was disinclined to do this, and put it off from himself with excuses; but on the entreaties of many of his friends, he promised at last to speak of it to the king;

but declared, at the same time, that he knew it would be taken very ill by the king to propose that he should give way in anything to the Swedish king. The same summer [1017] Hialte Skeggiason came over to Norway from Iceland, according to the message sent him by King Olaf, and went directly to the king. He was well received by the king, who told him to lodge in his house, and gave him a seat beside Biorn the marshal, and Hialte became his comrade at table. There was good-fellowship immediately between them.

Once, when King Olaf had assembled the people and bondes to consult upon the good of the country, Biorn the marshal said, "What think you, king, of the strife that is between the Swedish king and you? Many people have fallen on both sides, without its being at all more determined than before what each of you shall have of the kingdom. You have now been sitting in Viken one winter and two summers, and the whole country to the north is lying behind your back unseen; and the men who have property or udal rights in the north are weary of sitting here. Now it is the wish of the lendermen, of your other people, and of the bondes that this should come to an end. There is now a truce, agreement, and peace with the earl, and the West Gautland people who are nearest to us; and it appears to the people it would be best that you sent messengers to the Swedish king to offer a reconciliation on your side; and, without doubt, many who are about the Swedish king will support the proposal, for it is a common

gain for those who dwell in both countries, both here and there." This speech of Biorn's received great applause.

Then the king said, "It is fair, Biorn, that the advice thou hast given should be carried out by thyself. Thou shalt undertake this embassy thyself, and enjoy the good of it, if thou hast advised well; and if it involve any man in danger, thou hast involved thyself in it. Moreover, it belongs to thy office to declare to the multitude what I wish to have told." Then the king stood up, went to the church, and had high mass sung before him; and thereafter went to table.

The following day Hialte said to Biorn, "Why art thou so melancholy, man? Art thou sick, or art thou angry at any one?" Biorn tells Hialte his conversation with the king, and says it is a very dangerous errand.

Hialte says, "It is their lot who follow kings that they enjoy high honours, and are more respected than other men, but stand often in danger of their lives: and they must understand how to bear both parts of their lot. The king's luck is great; and much honour will be gained by this business, if it succeed."

Biorn answered, "Since thou makest so light of this business in thy speech, wilt thou go with me? The king has promised that I shall have companions with me on the journey."

"Certainly," says Hialte; "I will follow thee, if thou wilt: for never again shall I fall in with such a comrade if we part."

CHAPTER LXVIII.—*The Journey of Biorn the Marshal.*

A few days afterwards, when the king was at a Thing-meeting, Biorn came with eleven others. He says to the king that they were now ready to proceed on their mission, and that their horses stood saddled at the door. "And now," says he, "I would know with what errand I am to go, or what orders thou givest us."

"The king replies, "Ye shall carry these my words to the Swedish king—that I will establish peace between our countries up to the frontier which Olaf Trygveson had before me; and each shall bind himself faithfully not to trespass over it. But with regard to the loss of people, no man must mention it if peace there is to be; for the Swedish king cannot with money pay for the men the Swedes have deprived us of." Thereupon the king rose, and went out with Biorn and his followers; and he took a gold-mounted sword and a gold ring, and said, in handing over the sword to Biorn, "This I give thee: it was given to me in summer by Earl Ragnvald. To him ye shall go; and bring him word from me to advance your errand with his counsel and strength. This thy errand I will think well fulfilled if thou hearest the Swedish king's own words, be they yea or nay: and this gold ring thou shalt give Earl Ragnvald. These are tokens * he must know well."

* Before writing was a common accomplishment in courts, the only way of accrediting a special messenger between kings and great men was by giving the messenger a token; that is, some article well known by the person receiving the message to be the property of and valued by

Hialte went up to the king, saluted him, and said, "We need much, king, that thy luck attend us;" and wished that they might meet again in good health.

The king asked where Hialte was going.

"With Biorn," said he.

The king said, "It will assist much to the good success of the journey that thou goest too, for thy good fortune has often been proved; and be assured that I shall wish that all my luck, if that be of any weight, may attend thee and thy company."

Biorn and his followers rode their way, and came to Earl Ragnvald's court, where they were well received. Biorn was a celebrated and generally known man,—known by sight and speech to all who had ever seen King Olaf; for at every Thing, Biorn stood up and told the king's message. Ingibjorg, the earl's wife, went up to Hialte and looked at him. She recognised him, for she was living with her brother Olaf Trygveson when Hialte was there: and she knew how to reckon up the relationship between King Olaf and Vilborg, the wife of Hialte; for Eirik Biodaskalle father of Astrid, King Olaf Trygveson's mother, and Bodvar father of Olaf, mother of Gissur White the father of Vilborg, were

the person sending it. The exchange of tokens of friendship, and of presents of rings and jewels, was not merely an expression of the sentiments of friendship, but the means of confidential communications in business—the credentials of the persons sent with them as being messengers to be confided in, and having a real message to convey. Others, as well as the translator, may remember when, in remote parishes of the north of Scotland, it was no unusual circumstance to give a beggar the key of the girnal to carry to the house, as a token to the housewife that he was to get half a stone of meal by order of the gudeman.—L.

brother's sons of the lenderman Vikingakare of Vors.

They enjoyed here good entertainment. One day Biorn entered into conversation with the earl and Ingibjorg, in which he set forth his errand, and produced to the earl his tokens.

The earl replies, "What hast thou done, Biorn, that the king wishes thy death? For, so far from thy errand having any success, I do not think a man can be found who could speak these words to the Swedish king without incurring wrath and punishment. King Olaf, king of Sweden, is too proud for any man to speak to him on anything he is angry at."

Then Biorn says, "Nothing has happened to me that King Olaf is offended at; but many of his disposition act, both for themselves and others, in a way that only men who are daring can succeed in. But as yet all his plans have had good success, and I think this will turn out well too; so I assure you, earl, that I will actually travel to the Swedish king, and not turn back before I have brought to his ears every word that King Olaf told me to say to him, unless death prevent me, or that I am in bonds, and cannot perform my errand; and this I must do, whether you give any aid or no aid to me in fulfilling the king's wishes."

Then said Ingibjorg, "I will soon declare my opinion. I think, earl, thou must turn all thy attention to supporting King Olaf the king of Norway's desire that this message be laid before the Swedish

king, in whatever way he may answer it. Although the Swedish king's anger should be incurred, and our power and property be at stake, yet will I rather run the risk, than that it should be said the message of King Olaf was neglected from fear of the Swedish king. Thou hast that birth, strength of relations, and other means, that here in the Swedish land it is free to thee to tell thy mind, if it be right and worthy of being heard, whether it be listened to by few or many, great or little people, or by the king himself."

The earl replies, "It is known to every one how thou urgest me: it may be, according to thy counsel, that I should promise the king's men to follow them, so that they may get their errand laid before the Swedish king, whether he take it ill or take it well. But I will have my own counsel followed, and will not run hastily into Biorn's or any other man's measures, in such a highly important matter. It is my will that ye all remain here with me, so long as I think it necessary for the purpose of rightly forwarding this mission." Now as the earl had thus given them to understand that he would support them in the business, Biorn thanked him most kindly, and with the assurance that his advice should rule them altogether. Thereafter Biorn and his fellow-travellers remained very long in the earl's house.

CHAPTER LXIX.—*Of the Conversation of Biorn and Ingibjorg, Trygve's Daughter.*

Ingibjorg was particularly kind to them; and Biorn often spoke with her about the matter, and was

ill at ease that their journey was so long delayed. Hialte and the others often spoke together also about the matter; and Hialte said, "I will go to the king if ye like; for I am not a man of Norway, and the Swedes can have nothing to say to me. I have heard that there are Iceland men in the king's house who are my acquaintances, and are well treated; namely, the skalds Gissur Black and Ottar Black.* From them I shall get out what I can about the Swedish king; and if the business will really be so difficult as it now appears, or if there be any other way of promoting it, I can easily devise some errand that may appear suitable for me."

This counsel appeared to Biorn and Ingibjorg to be the wisest, and they resolved upon it among themselves. Ingibjorg put Hialte in a position to travel; gave him two Gautland men with him, and ordered them to follow him, and assist him with their service, and also to go wherever he might have occasion to send them. Besides, Ingibjorg gave him twenty marks of weighed silver money for travelling expenses, and sent word and token by him to the Swedish king Olaf's daughter, Ingigerd, that she should give all her assistance to Hialte's business, whenever he should find himself under the necessity of craving her help. Hialte set off as soon as he was ready. When he came to King Olaf he soon

* Ottar Black was the son of Sigvat skald's sister. He stayed a long time with the Swedish king Olaf, after whose death he came to King Olaf the Saint. He also served as skald at the court of King Canute the Great. He has been quoted in the preceding pages, and his drapa upon King Canute is quoted in chap. 160 of this saga.

found the skalds Gissur and Ottar, and they were very glad at his coming. Without delay they went to the king, and told him that a man was come who was their countryman, and one of the most considerable in their native land, and requested the king to receive him well. The king told them to take Hialte and his fellow-travellers into their company and quarters. Now when Hialte had resided there a short time, and got acquainted with people, he was much respected by everybody. The skalds were often in the king's house, for they were well-spoken men; and often in the daytime they sat in front of the king's high-seat, and Hialte, to whom they paid the highest respect in all things, by their side. He became thus known to the king, who willingly entered into conversation with him, and heard from him news about Iceland.

CHAPTER LXX.—*Of Sigvat the Skald.*

It happened that before Biorn set out from home he asked Sigvat the skald, who at that time was with King Olaf, to accompany him on his journey. It was a journey for which people had no great inclination. There was, however, great friendship between Biorn and Sigvat. Then Sigvat sang:—

"With the king's marshals all have I,
In days gone by,
Lived joyously,—
With all who on the king attend,
And knee before him humbly bend,
Biorn, thou oft hast ta'en my part—
Pleaded with art,
And touched the heart.

Biorn! brave stainer of the sword,
Thou art my friend—I trust thy word."

While they were riding up to Gautland, Sigvat made these verses:—

"Down the Fiord sweep wind and rain,
Our stout ship's sails and tackle strain;
Wet to the skin,
We're sound within,
And gaily o'er the waves are dancing,
Our sea-steed o'er the waves high prancing!
Through Lister sea
Flying all free;
Off from the wind with swelling sail,
We merrily scud before the gale,
And reach the sound
Where we were bound.
And now our ship, so gay and grand,
Glides past the green and lovely land,
And at the isle
Moors for a while.
Our horse-hoofs now leave hasty print;
We ride—of ease there's scanty stint—
In heat and haste
O'er Gautland's waste:
Though in a hurry to be married,
The king can't say that we have tarried."

One evening late they were riding through Gautland, and Sigvat made these verses:—

"The weary horse will at nightfall
Gallop right well to reach his stall;
When night meets day, with hasty hoof
He plies the road to reach a roof.
Far from the Danes, we now may ride
Safely by stream or mountain-side;
But, in this twilight, in some ditch
The horse and rider both may pitch."

They rode through the merchant town of Skarar,* and down the street to the earl's house. He sang:—

* Skarar is the present town Skara, in Skaning barony, formerly the chief town and the oldest in West Gautland, and the seat of the earls in former times.—L.

"The shy sweet girls, from window high,
In wonder peep at the sparks that fly
From our horses' heels, as down the street
Of the earl's town we ride so fleet.
Spur on!—that every pretty lass
May hear our horse-hoofs as we pass
Clatter upon the stones so hard,
And echo round the paved court-yard."

CHAPTER LXXI.—*Of Hialte Skeggiason while he was in Svithiod.*

One day Hialte, and the skalds with him, went before the king, and he began thus:—"It has so happened, king, as is known to you, that I have come here after a long and difficult journey; but when I had once crossed the ocean and heard of your greatness, it appeared to me unwise to go back without having seen you in your splendour and glory. Now it is a law between Iceland and Norway, that Iceland men pay landing dues when they come into Norway, but while I was coming across the sea I took myself all the landing dues* from my ship's people; but knowing that you have the greatest right to all the power in Norway, I hastened hither to deliver to you the landing dues." With this he showed the silver to the king, and laid ten marks of silver in Gissur Black's lap.

The king replies, "Few have brought us any such dues from Norway for some time; and now, Hialte, I will return you my warmest thanks for having given yourself so much trouble to bring us the landing dues, rather than pay them to our ene-

* See chap. 41.

mies. But I will that thou shouldst take this money from me as a gift, and with it my friendship."

Hialte thanked the king with many words, and from that day set himself in great favour with the king, and often spoke with him; for the king thought, what was true, that he was a man of much understanding and eloquence. Now Hialte told Gissur and Ottar that he was sent with tokens to the king's daughter Ingigerd, to obtain her protection and friendship; and he begged of them to procure him some opportunity to speak with her. They answered, that this was an easy thing to do; and went one day to her house, where she sat at the drinking table with many men. She received the skalds in a friendly manner, for they were known to her. Hialte brought her a salutation from the earl's wife, Ingibjorg; and said she had sent him here to obtain friendly help and succour from her, and in proof whereof produced his tokens. The king's daughter received him also kindly, and said he should be welcome to her friendship. They sat there till late in the day drinking. The king's daughter made Hialte tell her much news, and invited him to come often and converse with her. He did so: came there often, and spoke with the king's daughter; and at last entrusted her with the purpose of Biorn's and his comrades' journey, and asked her how she thought the Swedish king would receive the proposal that there should be a reconciliation between the kings. The king's daughter replied, that, in her opinion, it would be a useless attempt to propose to

the king any reconciliation with Olaf the Thick; for the king was so enraged against him, that he would not suffer his name to be mentioned before him. It happened one day that Hialte was sitting with the king and talking to him, and the king was very merry and drunk. Then Hialte said, "Manifold splendour and grandeur have I seen here; and I have now witnessed with my eyes what I have often heard of, that no monarch in the north is so magnificent: but it is very vexatious that we who come so far to visit it have a road so long and troublesome, both on account of the great ocean, but more especially because it is not safe to travel through Norway for those who are coming here in a friendly disposition. But why is there no one to bring proposals for a peace between you and King Olaf the Thick? I heard much in Norway, and in West Gautland, of the general desire that this peace should have taken place; and it has been told me for truth, as the Norway king's words, that he earnestly desires to be reconciled to you; and the reason I know is, that he feels how much less his power is than yours. It is even said that he intends to pay his court to your daughter Ingigerd; and that would lead to a useful peace, for I have heard from people of credit that he is a remarkably distinguished man."

The king answers, "Thou must not speak thus, Hialte; but for this time I will not take it amiss of thee, as thou dost not know what people have to avoid here. That fat fellow shall not be called king in my court, and there is by no means the stuff in

him that people talk of: and thou must see thyself that such a connection is not suitable; for I am the tenth king in Upsala who, relation after relation, has been sole monarch over the Swedish, and many other great lands, and all have been the superior kings over other kings in the northern countries. But Norway is little inhabited, and the inhabitants are scattered. There have only been small kings there; and although Harald Harfager was the greatest king in that country, and strove against the small kings, and subdued them, yet he knew so well his position that he did not covet the Swedish dominions, and therefore the Swedish kings let him sit in peace, especially as there was relationship between them. Thereafter, while Hakon Athelstan's foster-son was in Norway he sat in peace, until he began to maraud in Gautland and Denmark; on which a war-force came upon him, and took from him both life and land. Gunhild's sons also were cut off when they became disobedient to the Danish kings; and Harald Gormson joined Norway to his own dominions, and made it subject to scat to him. And we reckon Harald Gormson to be of less power and consideration than the Upsala kings, for our relation Styrbiorn subdued him, and Harald became his man; and yet Eirik the Victorious, my father, rose over Styrbiorn's head when it came to a trial between them. When Olaf Trygveson came to Norway and proclaimed himself king, we would not permit it, but we went with King Svein and cut him off; and thus we have appropriated Norway, as thou hast now heard, and with no less

right than if I had gained it in battle, and by conquering the kings who ruled it before. Now thou canst well suppose, as a man of sense, that I will not let slip the kingdom of Norway for this thick fellow. It is wonderful he does not remember how narrowly he made his escape, when we had penned him in in the Mælar lake. Although he slipped away with life from thence, he ought, methinks, to have something else in his mind than to hold out against us Swedes. Now, Hialte, thou must never again open thy mouth in my presence on such a subject."

Hialte saw sufficiently that there was no hope of the king's listening to any proposal of a peace, and desisted from speaking of it, and turned the conversation to something else. When Hialte, afterwards, came into discourse with the king's daughter Ingigerd, he tells her his conversation with the king. She told him she expected such an answer from the king. Hialte begged of her to say a good word to the king about the matter, but she thought the king would listen as little to what she said: "But speak about it I will, if thou requirest it." Hialte assured her he would be thankful for the attempt. One day the king's daughter Ingigerd had a conversation with her father Olaf; and as she found her father was in a particularly good humour, she said, "What is now thy intention with regard to the strife with Olaf the Thick? There are many who complain about it, having lost their property by it; others have lost their relations by the Northmen, and all their peace and quiet; so that none of your men see any harm

that can be done to Norway. It would be a bad counsel if thou sought the dominion over Norway; for it is a poor country, difficult to come at, and the people dangerous: for the men there will rather have any other for their king than thee. If I might advise, thou wouldst let go all thoughts about Norway, and not desire Olaf's heritage; and rather turn thyself to the kingdoms in the East country, which thy forefathers the former Swedish kings had, and which our relation Styrbiorn lately subdued, and let the thick Olaf possess the heritage of his forefathers and make peace with him."

The king replies in a rage, "It is thy counsel, Ingigerd, that I should let slip the kingdom of Norway, and give thee in marriage to this thick Olaf.—No," says he, "something else shall first take place. Rather than that, I shall, at the Upsala Thing in winter, issue a proclamation to all Swedes, that the whole people shall assemble for an expedition, and go to their ships before the ice is off the waters; and I will proceed to Norway, and lay waste the land with fire and sword, and burn everything, to punish them for their want of fidelity."

The king was so mad with rage that nobody ventured to say a word, and she went away. Hialte, who was watching for her, immediately went to her, and asked how her errand to the king had turned out. She answered, it turned out as she had expected; that none could venture to put in a word with the king; but, on the contrary, he had used threats; and she begged Hialte never to speak of

the matter again before the king. As Hialte and Ingigerd spoke together often, Olaf the Thick was often the subject, and he told her about him and his manners; and Hialte praised the king of Norway what he could, but said no more than was the truth, and she could well perceive it. Once, in a conversation, Hialte said to her, "May I be permitted, daughter of the king, to tell thee what lies in my mind?"

"Speak freely," says she; "but so that I alone can hear it."

"Then," said Hialte, "what would be thy answer, if the Norway king Olaf sent messengers to thee with the errand to propose marriage to thee?"

She blushed, and answered slowly but gently, "I have not made up my mind to answer to that; but if Olaf be in all respects so perfect as thou tellest me, I could wish for no other husband; unless, indeed, thou hast gilded him over with thy praise more than sufficiently."

Hialte replied, that he had in no respect spoken better of the king than was true. They often spoke together on the same subject. Ingigerd begged Hialte to be cautious not to mention it to any other person, for the king would be enraged against him if it came to his knowledge. Hialte only spoke of it to the skalds Gissur and Ottar, who thought it was the most happy plan, if it could but be carried into effect. Ottar, who was a man of great power of conversation, and much beloved in the court, soon brought up the subject before the king's daughter,

and recounted to her, as Hialte had done, all King Olaf's excellent qualities. Often spoke Hialte and the others about him; and now that Hialte knew the result of his mission, he sent those Gautland men away who had accompanied him, and let them return to the earl with letters* which the king's daughter Ingigerd sent to the earl and Ingibjorg. Hialte also let them give a hint to the earl about the conversation he had had with Ingigerd, and her answer thereto; and the messengers came with it to the earl a little before Yule.

CHAPTER LXXII.—*Olaf's Journey to the Uplands.*

When King Olaf had despatched Biorn and his followers to Gautland, he sent other people also to the Uplands, with the errand that they should have guest-quarters prepared for him, as he intended that winter [1018] to live as guest in the Uplands; for it had been the custom of former kings to make a progress in guest-quarters every third year in the Uplands. In autumn he began his progress from Sarpsborg, and went first to Vingulmark. He ordered his progress so that he came first to lodge in the neighbourhood of the forest habitations, and summoned to him all the men of the habitations who dwelt at the greatest distance from the head-habitations of the district; and he inquired particularly how it stood with their Christianity, and, where

* This seems the first notice we have in the sagas of written letters being sent instead of tokens and verbal messages.—L.

improvement was needful, he taught them the right customs. If any there were who would not renounce heathen ways, he took the matter so zealously that he drove some out of the country, mutilated others of hands or feet, or stung their eyes out; hung up some, cut down some with the sword; but let none go unpunished who would not serve God. He went thus through the whole district, sparing neither great nor small. He gave them teachers, and placed these as thickly in the country as he saw needful. In this manner he went about in that district, and had 300 deadly men-at-arms with him; and then proceeded to Raumarike. He soon perceived that Christianity was thriving less the farther he proceeded into the interior of the country. He went forward everywhere in the same way, converting all the people to the right faith, and severely punishing all who would not listen to his word.

CHAPTER LXXIII.—*The Treachery of the Upland Kings.*

Now when the king who at that time ruled in Raumarike heard of this, he thought it was a very bad affair; for every day came men to him, both great and small, who told him what was doing. Therefore this king resolved to go up to Hedemark, and consult King Hrorek, who was the most eminent for understanding of the kings who at that time were in the country. Now when these kings spoke with each other, they agreed to send a message to Gudrod, the valley-king north in the Gudbransdal, and likewise to

the king who was in Hadaland, and bid them to come to Hedemark, to meet Hrorek and the other kings there. They did not spare their travelling; for five kings met in Hedemark, at a place called Ringsaker. Ring, King Hrorek's brother, was the fifth of these kings. The kings had first a private conference together, in which he who came from Raumarike first took up the word, and told of King Olaf's proceedings, and of the disturbance he was causing both by killing and mutilating people. Some he drove out of the country, some he deprived of their offices or property if they spoke anything against him; and, besides, he was travelling over the country with a great army, not with the number of people fixed by law for a royal progress in guest-quarters. He added, that he had fled hither upon account of this disturbance, and many powerful people with him had fled from their udal properties in Raumarike. "But although as yet the evil is nearest to us, it will be but a short time before ye will also be exposed to it; therefore it is best that we all consider together what resolution we shall take." When he had ended his speech, Hrorek was desired to speak; and he said, "Now is the day come that I foretold when we had our meeting at Hadaland, and ye were all so eager to raise Olaf over our heads; namely, that as soon as he was the supreme master of the country we would find it hard to hold him by the horns. We have but two things now to do: the one is, to go all of us to him, and let him do with us as he likes, which I think is the best thing we can do; or the other

is, to rise against him before he has gone farther through the country. Although he has 300 or 400 men, that is not too great a force for us to meet, if we are only all in movement together: but, in general, there is less success and advantage to be gained when several of equal strength are joined together, than when one alone stands at the head of his own force; therefore it is my advice, that we do not venture to try our luck against Olaf Haraldson."

Thereafter each of the kings spoke according to his own mind, some dissuading from going out against King Olaf, others urging it; and no determination was come to, as each had his own reasons to produce.

Then Gudrod, the valley-king, took up the word, and spoke:—"It appears wonderful to me, that ye make such a long roundabout in coming to a resolution; and probably ye are frightened for him. We are here five kings, and none of less high birth than Olaf. We gave him the strength to fight with Earl Svein, and with our forces he has brought the country under his power. But if he grudges each of us the little kingdom he had before, and threatens us with tortures, or gives us ill words, then say I for myself, that I will withdraw myself from the king's slavery; and I do not call him a man among you who is afraid to cut him off, if he come into our hands here up in Hedemark. And this I can tell you, that we shall never bear our heads in safety while Olaf is in life." After this encouragement they all agreed to his determination.

Then said Hrorek, "With regard to this determina-

tion, it appears to me necessary to make our agreement so strong that no one shall fail in his promise to the other. Therefore, if ye determine upon attacking Olaf at a fixed time, when he comes here to Hedemark, I will not trust much to you if some are north in the valleys, others up in Hedemark; but if our resolution is to come to anything, we must remain here assembled together day and night."

This the kings agreed to, and kept themselves there all assembled, ordering a feast to be provided for them there at Ringsaker, and drank there a cup to success; sending out spies to Raumarike, and when one set came in sending out others, so that day and night they had intelligence of Olaf's proceedings, and of the numbers of his men. King Olaf went about in Raumarike in guest-quarters, and altogether in the way before related; but as the provision of the guest-quarter was not always sufficient, upon account of his numerous followers, he laid it upon the bondes to give additional contributions wherever he found it necessary to stay. In some places he stayed longer, in others, shorter than was fixed; and his journey down to the lake Miosen was shorter than had been fixed on. The kings, after taking their resolution, sent out message-tokens, and summoned all the lendermen and powerful bondes from all the districts thereabout; and when they had assembled the kings had a private meeting with them, and made their determination known, setting a day for gathering together and carrying it into effect; and it was settled among them that each of the

kings should have 300 (= 360) men. Then they sent away the lendermen to gather the people, and meet all at the appointed place. The most approved of the measure; but it happened here, as it usually does, that every one has some friend even among his enemies.

CHAPTER LXXIV.—*The Mutilating of the Upland Kings.*

Ketil of Ringunes was at this meeting. Now when he came home in the evening he took his supper, put on his clothes, and went down with his house-servants to the lake; took a light vessel which he had, the same that King Olaf had made him a present of, and launched it on the water. They found in the boat-house everything ready to their hands; betook themselves to their oars, and rowed out into the lake.* Ketil had forty well-armed men with him, and came early in the morning to the end of the lake. He set off immediately with twenty men, leaving the other twenty to look after the ship. King Olaf was at that time at Eid, in the upper end of Raumarike. Thither Ketil arrived just as the king was coming from matins. The king received Ketil kindly. He said he must speak with the king in all haste; and they had a private conference together. There Ketil tells the king the resolution which the kings had taken, and their agreement, which he had come to the certain knowledge of. When the king learnt this he called his people together, and sent some out to collect riding-horses in the country; others he sent down to the lake to

* The Miösen is a lake of sixty or seventy miles in length.—L.

take all the rowing-vessels they could lay hold of, and keep them for his use. Thereafter he went to the church, had mass sung before him, and then sat down to table. After his meal he got ready, and hastened down to the lake, where the vessels were coming to meet him. He himself went on board the light vessel, and as many men with him as it could stow, and all the rest of his followers took such boats as they could get hold of; and when it was getting late in the evening they set out from the land, in still and calm weather. He rowed up the water with 400* men, and came with them to Ringsaker before day dawned; and the watchmen were not aware of the army before they were come into the very court. Ketil knew well in what houses the kings slept, and the king had all these houses surrounded and guarded, so that nobody could get out; and so they stood till daylight. The kings had not people enough to make resistance, but were all taken prisoners, and led before the king. Hrorek was an able but obstinate man, whose fidelity the king could not trust to if he made peace with him; therefore he ordered both his eyes to be punched out, and took him in that condition about with him. He ordered Gudrod's tongue to be cut out; but Ring and two others he banished from Norway, under oath never to return. Of the lendermen and bondes who had actually taken part in the traitorous design, some he drove out of the country, some he mutilated, and with others he made peace. Ottar Black tells of this:—

* 480.

"The giver of rings of gold,
The army leader bold,
In vengeance springs
On the Hedemark kings.
Olaf, the bold and great,
Repays their foul deceit—
In full repays
Their treacherous ways.
He drives with steel-clad hand
The small kings from the land,—
Greater by far
In deed of war.
The king who dwelt most north
Tongueless must wander forth:
All fly away
In great dismay.
King Olaf now rules o'er
What five kings ruled before—
To Eid's old bound
Extends his ground.
No king in days of yore
E'er won so much before:
That this is so
All Norsemen know."

King Olaf took possession of the land these five kings had possessed, and took hostages from the lendermen and bondes in it. He took money instead of guest-quarters from the country north of the valley district, and from Hedemark; and then returned to Raumarike, and so west to Hadaland. This winter [1018] his stepfather Sigurd Syr died; and King Olaf went to Ringarike, where his mother Asta made a great feast for him. Olaf alone bore the title of king now in Norway.

CHAPTER LXXV.—*Of King Olaf's Half-brothers.*

It is told that when King Olaf was on his visit to his mother Asta, she brought out her children,

and showed them to him. The king took his brother Guthorm on the one knee, and his brother Halfdan on the other. The king looked at Guthorm, made a wry face, and pretended to be angry at them; at which the boys were afraid. Then Asta brought her youngest son, called Harald, who was three years old, to him. The king made a wry face at him also; but he looked the king in the face without regarding it. The king took the boy by the hair, and plucked it; but the boy seized the king's whiskers, and gave them a tug. "Then," said the king, "thou wilt be revengeful, my friend, some day." The following day the king was walking with his mother about the farm, and they came to a playground, where Asta's sons, Guthorm and Halfdan, were amusing themselves. They were building great houses and barns in their play, and were supposing them full of cattle and sheep; and close beside them, in a clay pool, Harald was busy with chips of wood, sailing them in his sport along the edge. The king asked him what these were; and he answered, these were his ships of war. The king laughed, and said, "The time may come, friend, when thou wilt command ships."

Then the king called to him Halfdan and Guthorm; and first he asked Guthorm, "What wouldst thou like best to have?"

"Corn land," replied he.

"And how great wouldst thou like thy corn land to be?"

"I would have the whole ness that goes out into

the lake sown with corn every summer." On that ness there are ten farms.

The king replies, "There would be a great deal of corn there." And, turning to Halfdan, he asked, "And what wouldst thou like best to have?"

"Cows," he replied.

"How many wouldst thou like to have?"

"When they went to the lake to be watered I would have so many, that they stood as tight round the lake as they could stand."

"That would be a great housekeeping," said the king; "and therein ye take after your father."

Then the king says to Harald,* "And what wouldst thou like best to have?"

"House-servants."

"And how many wouldst thou have?"

"Oh! so many I would like to have as would eat up my brother Halfdan's cows at a single meal."

The king laughed, and said to Asta, "Here, mother, thou art bringing up a king." And more is not related of them on this occasion.

CHAPTER LXXVI.—*Of the Division of the Country, and of the Laws in Svithiod.*

In Svithiod it was the old custom, as long as heathenism prevailed, that the chief sacrifice took place in Goe month † at Upsala. Then sacrifice was offered for peace, and victory to the king; and thither

* This Harald afterwards became king of Norway, and was called Harald Hardrade (the Severe). See his saga.

† Goe month included the time from February 20 to March 20.—L.

came people from all parts of Svithiod. All the Things of the Swedes, also, were held there, and markets, and meetings for buying, which continued for a week: and after Christianity was introduced into Svithiod, the Things and fairs were held there as before. After Christianity had taken root in Svithiod, and the kings would no longer dwell in Upsala, the market-time was moved to Candlemas, and it has since continued so, and it lasts only three days. There is then the Swedish Thing also, and people from all quarters come there. Svithiod is divided into many parts. One part is West Gautland, Vermaland, and the Marks, with what belongs to them; and this part of the kingdom is so large, that the bishop who is set over it has 1100 churches * under him. The other part is East Gautland, where there is also a bishop's seat, to which the islands of Gotland and Eyland belong; and forming all together a still greater bishopric. In Svithiod itself there is a part of the country called Sudermanland, where there is also a bishopric. Then comes Westmanland, or Fiathrundaland, which is also a bishopric. The third portion of Svithiod proper is called Tiundaland; the fourth Attandaland; the fifth Sialand, and what belongs to it lies eastward along the coast. Tiundaland is the best and most inhabited part of Svithiod, under which the other kingdoms stand. There Upsala is situated, the seat of the king and arch-

* This statement, found also in Rimbegla, is evidently an exaggeration. At the close of the fourteenth century there were 595 churches, and Styffe counts 631 in the time of the Calmar Union. Schlyter thinks that there may be an error in copying, and that the original manuscript may have read vi. instead of xi.

bishop; and from it Upsala-*audr*, or the domain of the Swedish kings, takes its name. Each of these divisions of the country has its Lag-thing, and its own laws in many parts. Over each is a lagman, who rules principally in affairs of the bondes; for that becomes law which he, by his speech, determines them to make law: and if king, earl, or bishop goes through the country, and holds a Thing with the bondes, the lagmen reply on account of the bondes, and they all follow their lagmen; so that even the most powerful men scarcely dare to come to their Al-thing without regarding the bondes' and lagmens' law. And in all matters in which the laws differ from each other, Upsala-law is the directing law; and the other lagmen are under the lagman who dwells in Tiundaland.

CHAPTER LXXVII.—*Of the Lagman Thorgny.*

In Tiundaland there was a lagman who was called Thorgny, whose father was called Thorgny Thorgnyson. His forefathers had for a long course of years, and during many kings' times, been lagmen of Tiundaland. At this time Thorgny was old, and had a great court about him. He was considered one of the wisest men in Sweden, and was Earl Ragnvald's relation and foster-father.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.—*Meeting of Earl Ragnvald and the King's Daughter Ingigerd.*

Now we must go back in our story to the time when the men whom the king's daughter Ingigerd

and Hialte had sent from the east came to Earl Ragnvald. They relate their errand to the earl and his wife Ingibjorg, and tell how the king's daughter had oft spoken to the Swedish king about a peace between him and King Olaf the Thick, and that she was a great friend of King Olaf; but that the Swedish king flew into a passion every time she named Olaf, so that she had no hopes of any peace. The Earl told Biorn the news he had received from the east; but Biorn gave the same reply, that he would not turn back until he had met the Swedish king, and said the earl had promised to go with him. Now the winter was passing fast, and immediately after Yule the earl made himself ready to travel with sixty men, among whom were the marshal Biorn and his companions. The earl proceeded eastward all the way to Svithiod; but when he came a little way into the country he sent his men before him to Upsala with a message to Ingigerd the king's daughter to come out to meet him at Ullaraker, where she had a large farm. When the king's daughter got the earl's message she made herself ready immediately to travel with a large attendance, and Hialte accompanied her. But before he took his departure he went to King Olaf, and said, "Continue always to be the most fortunate of monarchs! Such splendour as I have seen about thee I have in truth never witnessed elsewhere, and wheresoever I come it shall not be concealed. Now, king, may I entreat thy favour and friendship in time to come?"

The king replies, "Why art thou in so great a haste, and where art thou going?"

Hialte replies, "I am to ride out to Ullaraker with Ingigerd thy daughter."

The king says, "Farewell, then: a man thou art of understanding and politeness, and well suited to live with people of rank."

Thereupon Hialte withdrew.

The king's daughter Ingigerd rode to her farm in Ullaraker, and ordered a great feast to be prepared for the earl. When the earl arrived he was welcomed with gladness, and he remained there several days. The earl and the king's daughter talked much, and of many things, but most about the Swedish and Norwegian kings; and she told the earl that in her opinion there was no hope of peace between them.

Then said the earl, "How wouldst thou like it, my cousin, if Olaf king of Norway were to pay his addresses to thee? It appears to us that it would contribute most towards a settled peace if there was relationship established between the kings; but I would not support such a matter if it were against thy inclination."

She replies, "My father disposes of my hand; but among all my other relations thou art he whose advice I would rather follow in weighty affairs. Dost thou think it would be advisable?" The earl recommended it to her strongly, and reckoned up many excellent achievements of King Olaf's. He told her, in particular, about what had lately been done; that King Olaf in an hour's time one morning

had taken five kings prisoners, deprived them all of their governments, and laid their kingdoms and properties under his own power. Much they talked about the business, and in all their conversations they perfectly agreed with each other. When the earl was ready he took leave, and proceeded on his way, taking Hialte with him.

CHAPTER LXXIX.—*Of Earl Ragnvald and the Lagman Thorgny.*

Earl Ragnvald came towards evening one day to the house of Lagman Thorgny. It was a great and stately mansion, and many people stood outside, who received the earl kindly, and took care of the horses and baggage. The earl went into the room, where there was a number of people. In the high-seat sat an old man; and never had Biorn or his companions seen a man so stout. His beard was so long that it lay upon his knee, and was spread over his whole breast; and the man, moreover, was handsome and stately in apperance. The earl went forward and saluted him. Thorgny received him joyfully and kindly, and bade him go to the seat he was accustomed to take. The earl seated himself on the other side, opposite to Thorgny. They remained there some days before the earl disclosed his errand, and then he asked Thorgny to go with him into the conversing room. Biorn and his followers went there with the earl. Then the earl began, and told how Olaf king of Norway had sent these men hither to

conclude a peaceful agreement. He showed at great length of what injury it was to the West Gautland people, that there was hostility between their country and Norway. He further related that Olaf the king of Norway had sent ambassadors, who were here present, and to whom he had promised he would attend them to the Swedish king; but he added, "The Swedish king takes the matter so grievously, that he has uttered menaces against those who entertain it. Now so it is, my foster-father, that I do not trust to myself in this matter; but am come on a visit to thee to get good counsel and help from thee in the matter."

Now when the earl had done speaking Thorgny sat silent for a while, and then took up the word. "Ye have curious dispositions who are so ambitious of honour and renown, and yet have no prudence or counsel in you when you get into any mischief. Why did you not consider, before you gave your promise to this adventure, that you had no power to stand against King Olaf? In my opinion it is not a less honourable condition to be in the number of bondes, and have one's words free, and be able to say what one will, even if the king be present. But I must go to the Upsala Thing, and give thee such help that without fear thou canst speak before the king what thou findest good."

The earl thanked him for the promise, remained with Thorgny, and rode with him to the Upsala Thing. There was a great assemblage of people at the Thing, and King Olaf was there with his court.

Chapter LXXX.—*Of the Upsala Thing.*

The first day the Thing sat, King Olaf was seated on a stool, and his court stood in a circle around him. Right opposite to him sat Earl Ragnvald and Thorgny in the Thing upon one stool, and before them the earl's court and Thorgny's house-people. Behind their stool stood the bonde community, all in a circle around them. Some stood upon hillocks and heights, in order to hear the better. Now when the king's messages, which are usually handled in the Things, were produced and settled, the marshal Biorn rose beside the earl's stool, and said aloud, "King Olaf sends me here with the message that he will offer to the Swedish king peace, and the frontiers that in old times were fixed between Norway and Svithiod." He spoke so loud that the Swedish king could distinctly hear him; but at first, when he heard King Olaf's name spoken, he thought the speaker had some message or business of his own to execute; but when he heard of peace, and the frontiers between Norway and Svithiod, he saw from what root it came, and sprang up, and called out that the man should be silent, for that such speeches were useless. Thereupon Biorn sat down; and when the noise had ceased Earl Ragnvald stood up and made a speech.

He spoke of Olaf the Thick's message, and proposal of peace to Olaf the Swedish king; and that all the West Gautland people sent their entreaty to Olaf that he would make peace with the king

of Norway. He recounted all the evils the West Gautlanders were suffering under; that they must go without all the things from Norway which were necessary in their households; and, on the other hand, were exposed to attack and hostility whenever the king of Norway gathered an army and made an inroad on them. The earl added, that Olaf the Norway king had sent men hither with the intent to obtain Ingigerd the king's daughter in marriage.

When the earl had done speaking Olaf the Swedish king stood up and replied, and was altogether against listening to any proposals of peace, and made many and heavy reproaches against the earl for his impudence in entering into a peaceful truce with the thick fellow, and making up a peaceful friendship with him, and which in truth he considered treason against himself. He added, that it would be well deserved if Earl Ragnvald were driven out of the kingdom. The earl had, in his opinion, the influence of his wife Ingibjorg to thank for what might happen; and it was the most imprudent fancy he could have fallen upon to take up with such a wife. The king spoke long and bitterly, turning his speech always against Olaf the Thick. When he sat down not a sound was to be heard at first.

CHAPTER LXXXI.—*Thorgny's Speech.*

Then Thorgny stood up; and when he arose all the bondes stood up who had before been sitting, and rushed together from all parts to listen to what

Lagman Thorgny would say. At first there was a great din of people and weapons; but when the noise was settled into silent listening, Thorgny made his speech. "The disposition of Swedish kings is different now from what it has been formerly. My grandfather Thorgny could well remember the Upsala king Eirik Eymundson, and used to say of him that when he was in his best years he went out every summer on expeditions to different countries, and conquered for himself Finland, Kirjalaland, Courland, Esthonia, and the eastern countries all around; and at the present day the earth-bulwarks, ramparts, and other great works which he made are to be seen. And, moreover, he was not so proud that he would not listen to people who had anything to say to him. My father, again, was a long time with King Biorn, and was well acquainted with his ways and manners. In Biorn's lifetime his kingdom stood in great power, and no kind of want was felt, and he was gay and sociable with his friends. I also remember King Eirik the Victorious, and was with him on many a war-expedition. He enlarged the Swedish dominion, and defended it manfully; and it was also easy and agreeable to communicate our opinions to him. But the king we have now got allows no man to presume to talk with him, unless it be what he desires to hear. On this alone he applies all his power, while he allows his scat-lands in other countries to go from him through laziness and weakness. He wants to have the Norway kingdom laid under him, which no Swedish king before him ever desired, and therewith

brings war and distress on many a man. Now it is our will, we bondes, that thou King Olaf make peace with the Norway king, Olaf the Thick, and marry thy daughter Ingigerd to him. Wilt thou, however, reconquer the kingdoms in the east countries which thy relations and forefathers had there, we will all for that purpose follow thee to the war. But if thou wilt not do as we desire, we will now attack thee, and put thee to death; for we will no longer suffer law and peace to be disturbed. So our forefathers went to work when they drowned five kings in a morass at the Mula-thing, and they were filled with the same insupportable pride thou hast shown towards us. Now tell us, in all haste, what resolution thou wilt take." Then the whole public approved, with clash of arms and shouts, the lagman's speech.

The king stands up and says he will let things go according to the desire of the bondes. "All Swedish kings," he said, "have done so, and have allowed the bondes to rule in all according to their will." The murmur among the bondes then came to an end; and the chiefs, the king, the earl, and Thorgny talked together, and concluded a truce and reconciliation, on the part of the Swedish king, according to the terms which the king of Norway had proposed by his ambassadors; and it was resolved at the Thing that Ingigerd, the king's daughter, should be married to Olaf Haraldson. The king left it to the earl to make the contract feast, and gave him full powers to conclude this marriage affair; and after this was settled at the Thing, they separated. When

the earl returned homewards, he and the king's daughter Ingigerd had a meeting, at which they talked between themselves over this matter. She sent Olaf a long cloak of fine linen richly embroidered with gold, and with silk points.* The earl returned to Gautland, and Biorn with him; and after staying with him a short time, Biorn and his company returned to Norway. When he came to King Olaf he told him the result of his errand, and the king returned him many thanks for his conduct, and said Biorn had had great success in bringing his errand to so favourable a conclusion against such animosity.

Chapter LXXXII.—*Of King Hrorek's Treachery.*

On the approach of spring [1018] King Olaf went down to the coast, had his ships rigged out, summoned troops to him, and proceeded in spring out from Viken to the Naze, and so north to Hordaland. He then sent messages to all the lendermen, selected the most considerable men in each district, and made the most splendid preparations to meet his bride. The wedding-feast was to be in autumn, at the Gaut river, on the frontiers of the two countries. King Olaf had with him the blind king Hrorek. When his wound was healed, the king gave him two men to serve him, let him sit in the high-seat by his side, and kept him in meat and clothes in no

* Silki-ræmur appear to have been silk tassels or ties on the cloak of fine linen (pell), which was embroidered with gold.—L.

respect worse than he had kept himself before. Hrorek was taciturn, and answered short and cross when any one spoke to him. It was his custom to make his footboy, when he went out in the daytime, lead him away from people, and then to beat the lad until he ran away. He would then complain to King Olaf that the lad would not serve him. The king changed his servants, but it was as before; no servant would hold it out with King Hrorek. Then the king appointed a man called Svein to wait upon and serve King Hrorek. He was Hrorek's relation, and had formerly been in his service. Hrorek continued with his habits of moroseness, and of solitary walks; but when he and Svein were alone together, he was merry and talkative. He used to bring up many things which had happened in former days when he was king. He alluded, too, to the man who had, in his former days, torn him from his kingdom and happiness, and made him live on alms. "It is hardest of all," says he, "that thou and my other relations, who ought to be men of bravery, are so degenerated that thou wilt not avenge the shame and disgrace brought upon our race." Such discourse he often brought out. Svein said, they had too great a power to deal with, while they themselves had but little means. Hrorek said, "Why should we live longer as mutilated men with disgrace? I, a blind man, may conquer them as well as they conquered me when I was asleep. Come then, let us kill this thick Olaf. He is not afraid for himself at present. I will lay the plan, and

would not spare my hands if I could use them, but that I cannot by reason of my blindness; therefore thou must use the weapons against him, and as soon as Olaf is killed I can see well enough that his power must come into the hands of his enemies, and it may well be that I shall be king, and thou shalt be my earl." So much persuasion he used that Svein at last agreed to join in the deed. The plan was so laid that when the king was ready to go to vespers, Svein stood on the threshold with a drawn dagger under his cloak. Now when the king came out of the room, it so happened that he walked quicker than Svein expected; and when he looked the king in the face he grew pale, and then white as a corpse, and his hand sank down. The king observed his terror, and said, "What is this, Svein? Wilt thou betray me?" Svein threw down his cloak and dagger, and fell at the king's feet, saying, "All is in God's hands and thine, king!" The king ordered his men to seize Svein, and he was put in irons. The king ordered Hrorek's seat to be moved to another bench. He gave Svein his life, and he left the country. The king appointed a different lodging for Hrorek to sleep in from that in which he slept himself, and in which many of his court-people slept. He set two of his court-men, who had been long with him, and whose fidelity he had proof of, to attend Hrorek day and night; but it is not said whether they were people of high birth or not. King Hrorek's mood was very different at different times. Sometimes he would sit silent for

days together, so that no man could get a word out of him; and sometimes he was so merry and gay, that people found a joke in every word he said. Sometimes his words were very bitter. He was sometimes in a mood that he would drink them all under the benches, and made all his neighbours drunk; but in general he drank but little. King Olaf gave him plenty of pocket-money. When he went to his lodgings he would often, before going to bed, have some stoups of mead brought in, which he gave to all the men in the house to drink, so that he was much liked.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.—*Of Little Fin.*

There was a man from the Uplands called Fin the Little, and some said of him that he was of Finnish * race. He was a remarkable little man, but so swift of foot that no horse could overtake him. He was a particularly well-exercised runner with snow-shoes, and shooter with the bow. He had long been in the service of King Hrorek, and often employed in errands of trust. He knew the roads in all the Upland hills, and was well known to all the great people. Now when King Hrorek was set under guards on the journey Fin would often slip in among the men of the guard, and followed, in general, with the lads and serving-men; but as often as he could he waited upon Hrorek, and entered into conversation with him. The king, however, only

* The Laplanders are called Fins in Norway and Sweden.—L.

spoke a word or two with him at a time, to prevent suspicion. In spring, when they came a little way beyond Viken, Fin disappeared from the army for some days, but came back, and stayed with them a while. This happened often, without any one observing it particularly; for there were many such hangers-on with the army.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.—*Of the Murder of some of King Olaf's Court-men.*

King Olaf came to Tunsberg before Easter [1018], and remained there late in spring. Many merchant vessels came to the town, both from Saxon-land and Denmark, and from Viken, and from the north parts of the country. There was a great assemblage of people; and as the times were good, there was many a drinking meeting. It happened one evening that King Hrorek came rather late to his lodging; and as he had drunk a great deal, he was remarkably merry. Little Fin came to him with a stoup of mead with herbs in it, and very strong. The king made every one in the house drunk, until they fell asleep each in his berth. Fin had gone away, and a light was burning in the lodging. Hrorek waked the men who usually followed him, and told them he wanted to go out into the yard. They had a lantern with them, for outside it was pitch dark. Out in the yard there was a large privy standing upon pillars, and a stair to go up to it. While Hrorek and his guards were in the yard they heard a man say, "Cut

down that devil;" and presently a crash, as if somebody fell. Hrorek said, "These fellows must be dead drunk to be fighting with each other so: run and separate them." They rushed out; but when they came out upon the steps both of them were killed: the man who went out the last was the first killed. There were twelve of Hrorek's men there, and among them Sigurd Hit, who had been his banner-man, and also Little Fin. They drew the dead bodies up between the houses, took the king with them, ran out to a boat they had in readiness, and rowed away. Sigvat the skald slept in King Olaf's lodgings. He got up in the night, and his footboy with him, and went to the privy. But as they were returning, on going down the stairs Sigvat's foot slipped, and he fell on his knee; and when he put out his hands he felt the stairs wet. "I think," said he, laughing, "the king must have given many of us tottering legs to-night." When they came into the house in which light was burning the footboy said, "Have you hurt yourself that you are all over so bloody?" He replied, "I am not wounded, but something must have happened here." Thereupon he wakened Thord Folason, who was standard-bearer, and his bedfellow. They went out with a light, and soon found the blood. They traced it, and found the corpses, and knew them. They saw also a great stump of a tree in which clearly a gash had been cut, which, as was afterwards known, had been done as a stratagem to entice those out who had been killed. Sigvat and Thord spoke

together, and agreed it was highly necessary to let the king know of this without delay. They immediately sent a lad to the lodging where Hrorek had been. All the men in it were asleep; but the king was gone. He wakened the men who were in the house, and told them what had happened. The men arose, and ran out to the yard where the bodies were; but, however needful it appeared to be that the king should know it, nobody dared to waken him.

Then said Sigvat to Thord, "What wilt thou rather do, comrade,—waken the king, or tell him the tidings?"

Thord replies, "I do not dare to waken him, and I would rather tell him the news."

Then said Sigvat, "There is much of the night still to pass, and before morning Hrorek may get himself concealed in such a way that it may be difficult to find him; but as yet he cannot be very far off, for the bodies are still warm. We must never let the disgrace rest upon us of concealing this treason from the king. Go thou, Thord, up to the lodging, and wait for me there."

Sigvat then went to the church, and told the bell-ringer to toll for the souls of the king's court-men, naming the men who were killed. The bell-ringer did as he was told. The king awoke at the ringing, sat up in his bed, and asked if it was already the hour of matins.

Thord replies, "It is worse than that, for there has occurred a very important affair. Hrorek is fled, and two of the court-men are killed."

The king asked how this had taken place, and Thord told him all he knew. The king got up immediately, ordered to sound the call for a meeting of the court, and when the people were assembled he named men to go out to every quarter from the town, by sea and land, to search for Hrorek. Thorer Lange took a boat, and set off with thirty men ; and when day dawned they saw two small boats before them in the channel, and when they saw each other both parties rowed as hard as they could. King Hrorek was there with thirty men. When they came quite close to each other Hrorek and his men turned towards the land, and all sprang on shore except the king, who sat on the aft seat. He bade them farewell, and wished they might meet each other again in better luck. At the same moment Thorer with his company rowed to the land. Fin the Little shot off an arrow, which hit Thorer in the middle of the body, and was his death; and Sigurd Hit, with his men, ran up into the forest. Thorer's men took his body, and transported it, together with Hrorek, to Tunsberg. King Olaf undertook himself thereafter to look after King Hrorek, made him be carefully guarded, and took good care of his treason, for which reason he had a watch over him night and day. King Hrorek thereafter was very gay, and nobody could observe but that he was in every way well satisfied.

Chapter LXXXV.—*Of Hrorek's Assault.*

It happened on Ascension-day* that King Olaf went to high mass, and the bishop went in procession around the church, and conducted the king; and when they came back to the church the bishop led the king to his seat on the north side of the choir. There Hrorek sat next to the king, and concealed his countenance in his upper cloak. When Olaf had seated himself Hrorek laid his hand on the king's shoulder, and felt it.

"Thou hast fine clothes on, cousin, to-day," says he.

King Olaf replies, "It is a festival to-day, in remembrance that Jesus Christ ascended to heaven from earth."

King Hrorek says, "I understand nothing about it, so as to hold in my mind what ye tell me about Christ. Much of what ye tell me appears to me incredible, although many wonderful things may have come to pass in old times."

When the mass was finished Olaf stood up, held his hands up over his head, and bowed down before the altar, so that his cloak hung down behind his shoulders. Then King Hrorek started up hastily and sharply, and struck at the king with a long knife of the kind called rytning; but the blow was received in the upper cloak at the shoulder, because the king was bending himself forwards. The clothes were much cut, but the king was not wounded.

* Occurred this year May 15.

When the king perceived the attack he sprang upon the floor; and Hrorek struck at him again with the knife, but did not reach him, and said, "Art thou flying, Olaf, from me, a blind man?" The king ordered his men to seize him and lead him out of the church, which was done. After this attempt many hastened to King Olaf, and advised that King Hrorek should be killed. "It is," said they, "tempting your luck in the highest degree, king, to keep him with you, and protect him, whatever mischief he may undertake; for night and day he thinks upon taking your life. And if you send him away, we know no one who can watch him so that he will not in all probability escape; and if once he gets loose he will assemble a great multitude, and do much evil."

The king replies, "You say truly that many a one has suffered death for less offence than Hrorek's; but willingly I would not darken the victory I gained over the Upland kings, when in one morning hour I took five kings prisoners, and got all their kingdoms: but yet, as they were my relations, I should not be their murderer but upon need. As yet I can scarcely see whether Hrorek puts me in the necessity of killing him or not."

It was to feel if King Olaf had armour on or not that Hrorek had laid his hand on the king's shoulder.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.—*King Hrorek's Journey to Iceland.*

There was an Iceland man, by name Thorarin Nefiulfson, who had his relations in the north of the

country. He was not of high birth, but particularly prudent, eloquent, and agreeable in conversation with people of distinction. He was also a far-travelled man, who had been long in foreign parts. Thorarin was a remarkably ugly man, principally because he had very ungainly limbs. He had great ugly hands, and his feet were still uglier. Thorarin was in Tunsberg when this event happened which has just been related, and he was known to King Olaf by their having had conversations together. Thorarin was just then done with rigging out a merchant vessel which he owned, and with which he intended to go to Iceland in summer. King Olaf had Thorarin with him as a guest for some days, and conversed much with him; and Thorarin even slept in the king's lodgings. One morning early the king awoke while the others were still sleeping. The sun had newly risen in the sky, and there was much light within. The king saw that Thorarin had stretched out one of his feet from under the bed-clothes, and he looked at the foot a while. In the meantime the others in the lodging awoke; and the king said to Thorarin, "I have been awake for a while, and have seen a sight which was worth seeing; and that is a man's foot so ugly that I do not think an uglier can be found in this merchant town." Thereupon he told the others to look at it, and see if it was not so; and all agreed with the king. When Thorarin observed what they were talking about, he said, "There are few things for which you cannot find a match, and that may be the case here."

The king says, "I would rather say that such another ugly foot cannot be found in the town, and I would lay any wager upon it."

Then said Thorarin, "I am willing to bet that I shall find an uglier foot still in the town."

The king — "Then he who wins shall have the right to get any demand from the other he chooses to make."

"Be it so," said Thorarin. Thereupon he stretches out his other foot from under the bed-clothes, and it was in no way handsomer than the other, and, moreover, wanted the little toe. "There," said Thorarin, "see now, king, my other foot, which is so much uglier; and, besides, has no little toe. Now I have won."

The king replies, "That other foot was so much uglier than this one by having five ugly toes upon it, and this has only four; and now I have won the choice of asking something from thee."

"The sovereign's decision must be right," says Thorarin; "but what does the king require of me?"

"To take Hrorek," said the king, "to Greenland, and deliver him to Leif Eirikson."

Thorarin replies, "I have never been in Greenland."

The king—"Thou, who art a far-travelled man, wilt now have an opportunity of seeing Greenland, if thou hast never been there before."

At first Thorarin did not say much about it; but as the king insisted on his wish he did not entirely decline, but said, "I will let you hear, king, what my

desire would have been had I gained the wager. It would have been to be received into your body of court-men; and if you will grant me that, I will be the more zealous now in fulfilling your pleasure." The king gave his consent, and Thorarin was made one of the court-men. Then Thorarin rigged out his vessel, and when he was ready he took on board King Hrorek. When Thorarin took leave of King Olaf, he said, "Should it now turn out, king, as is not improbable, and often happens, that we cannot effect the voyage to Greenland, but must run for Iceland or other countries, how shall I get rid of this king in a way that will be satisfactory to you?"

The king—"If thou comest to Iceland, deliver him into the hands of Gudmund Eyolfson,* or of Skapte† the lagman, or of some other chief who will receive my tokens and message of friendship. But if thou comest to other countries nearer to this, do so with him that thou canst know with certainty that King Hrorek never again shall appear in Norway; but do so only when thou seest no other way of doing whatsoever."

When Thorarin was ready for sea, and got a wind, he sailed outside of all the rocks and islands, and when he was to the north of the Naze set right out into the ocean. He did not immediately get a good wind, but he avoided coming near the land. He sailed until he made land which he knew, in the south part of Iceland, and sailed west around the land

* Gudmund's life is told in *Ljosvetninga Saga*. He died 1025.

† Skapte was eight times elected lagman in Iceland, 1004–1030, when he died. He is mentioned in the majority of the Icelandic sagas.

out into the Greenland ocean. There he encountered heavy storms, and drove long about upon the ocean; but when summer was coming to an end he landed again in Iceland in Breidafiord. Thorgils Arason* was the first man of any consequence who came to him. Thorarin brings him the king's salutation, message, and tokens, with which was the desire about King Hrorek's reception. Thorgils received these in a friendly way, and invited King Hrorek to his house, where he stayed all winter. But he did not like being there, and begged that Thorgils would let him go to Gudmund; saying he had heard some time or other that there, in Gudmund's house, was the most sumptuous way of living in Iceland, and that it was intended he should be in Gudmund's hands. Thorgils let him have his desire, and conducted him with some men to Gudmund at Modruveller. Gudmund received Hrorek kindly on account of the king's message, and he stayed there the next winter. He did not like being there either; and then Gudmund gave him a habitation upon a small farm called Kalfskin, where there were but few neighbours. There Hrorek passed the third winter, and said that since he had laid down his kingdom he thought himself most comfortably situated here; for here he was most respected by all. The summer after Hrorek fell sick, and died; and it is said he is the only king whose bones rest in Iceland. Thorarin Nefiulf-

* Thorgils was the son of Are Marson, who visited America (Vinland). Thorgils, who was still alive in the year 1024, was noted for his kindness toward all persecuted persons.

son was afterwards for a long time upon voyages; but sometimes he was with King Olaf.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.—*Battle in Ulfreks-fiord.*

The summer that Thorarin went with Hrorek to Iceland, Hialte Skeggiason went also to Iceland, and King Olaf gave him many friendly gifts with him when they parted. The same summer Eyvind Urarhorn went on an expedition to the West sea, and came in autumn to Ireland, to the Irish king Konofogor.* In autumn Einar earl of Orkney and this Irish king met in Ulfreks-fiord,† and there was a great battle, in which Konofogor gained the victory, having many more people. The earl fled with a single ship, and came back about autumn to Orkney, after losing most of his men and all the booty they had made. The earl was much displeased with his expedition, and threw the blame upon the Northmen, who had been in the battle on the side of the Irish king, for making him lose the victory.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.—*King Olaf Prepares for his Bridal Journey.*

Now we begin again our story where we let it slip—at King Olaf's travelling to his bridal, to receive his betrothed Ingigerd the king's daughter. The

* Konofogor's Irish name was Connor.

† Ulfreks-fiord must, according to the *Orkneyinga Saga*, be in Ireland, and is supposed by antiquaries to be either Dundalk bay or Strangford bay.—L.

king had a great body of men with him, and so chosen a body that all the great people he could lay hold of followed him; and every man of consequence had a chosen band of men with him distinguished by birth or other qualifications. The whole were well appointed, and equipped in ships, weapons, and clothes. They steered the fleet eastwards to Konungahella; but when they arrived there they heard nothing of the Swedish king, and none of his men had come there. King Olaf remained a long time in summer [1018] at Konungahella, and endeavoured carefully to make out what people said of the Swedish king's movements, or what were his designs; but no person could tell him anything for certain about it. Then he sent men up to Gautland to Earl Ragnvald, to ask him if he knew how it came to pass that the Swedish king did not come to the meeting agreed on. The earl replies, that he did not know. "But as soon," said he, "as I hear, I shall send some of my men to King Olaf, to let him know if there be any other cause for the delay than the multitude of affairs; as it often happens that the Swedish king's movements are delayed by this more than he could have expected."

CHAPTER LXXXIX.—*Of the Swedish King's Children.*

This Swedish king, Olaf Eirikson, had first a concubine who was called Edla, a daughter of an earl of Vindland, who had been captured in war, and therefore was called the king's slave-girl. Their children

were Emund,* Astrid, Holmfrid. . . .† They‡ had, besides, a son, who was born the day before St. Jacob's-day. When the boy was to be christened the bishop called him Jacob, which the Swedes did not like, as there never had been a Swedish king called Jacob. All King Olaf's children were handsome in appearance, and clever from childhood. The queen was proud, and did not behave well towards her step-children; therefore the king sent his son Emund to Vindland, to be fostered by his mother's relations, where he for a long time neglected his Christianity. The king's daughter, Astrid, was brought up in West Gautland, in the house of a worthy man called Egil. She was a very lovely girl: her words came well into her conversation; she was merry, but modest, and very generous. When she was grown up she was often in her father's house, and every man thought well of her. King Olaf was haughty and harsh in his speech. He took very ill the uproar and clamour the country people had raised against him at the Upsala Thing, as they had threatened him with violence, for which he laid the chief blame on Earl Ragnvald. He made no preparation for the bridal, according to the agreement to marry his daughter Ingigerd to Olaf the king of Norway, and to meet him on the borders for that purpose. As the summer advanced many of his men were anxious to know what the king's inten-

* Emund afterwards became king of Svithiod. Astrid became the wife of Olaf Digre. Holmfrid was already married to Earl Svein.

† The MS. is here defective, and the words wanting are probably the name of Olaf's queen and his first child with her.

‡ They, *i.e.*, the king and queen.

tions were; whether to keep to the agreement with King Olaf, or break his word, and with it the peace of the country. But no one was so bold as to ask the king, although they complained of it to Ingigerd, and besought her to find out what the king intended. She replied, "I have no inclination to speak to the king again about the matters between him and King Olaf; for he answered me ill enough once before when I brought forward Olaf's name." In the meantime Ingigerd, the king's daughter, took it to heart, became melancholy and sorrowful, and yet very curious to know what the king intended. She had much suspicion that he would not keep his word and promise to King Olaf; for he appeared quite enraged whenever Olaf the Thick's name was in any way mentioned.

CHAPTER XC.—*Of the Swedish King Olaf's Hunting.*

One morning early the king rode out with his dogs and falcons, and his men around him. When they let slip the falcons the king's falcon killed two black-cocks* in one flight, and three in another. The dogs ran and brought the birds when they had fallen to the ground. The king ran after them, took the game from them himself, was delighted with his sport, and said, "It will be long before the most of you have such success." They agreed in this; adding, that in their opinion no king had such luck in

* The bird is called in Icelandic *orri*, in modern Norwegian *aarfugl*. It is the *Tetrao tetrix*, moor-fowl, or heath-cock.

hunting as he had. Then the king rode home with his followers in high spirits. Ingigerd, the king's daughter, was just going out of her lodging when the king came riding into the yard, and she turned round and saluted him. He saluted her in return, laughing; produced the birds, and told her the success of his chase.

"Dost thou know of any king," said he, "who made so great a capture in so short a time?"

"It is indeed," replied she, "a good morning's hunting, to have got five black-cocks; but it was a still better when, in one morning, the king of Norway, Olaf, took five kings, and subdued all their kingdoms."

When the king heard this he sprang from his horse, turned to Ingigerd, and said, "Thou shalt know, Ingigerd, that however great thy love may be for this man, thou shalt never get him, nor he get thee. I will marry thee to some chief with whom I can be in friendship; but never can I be a friend of the man who has robbed me of my kingdom, and done me great mischief by marauding and killing through the land." With that their conversation broke off, and each went away.

CHAPTER XCI.—*Of Olaf the Norway King's Counsels.*

Ingigerd, the king's daughter, had now full certainty of King Olaf's intention, and immediately sent men to West Gautland to Earl Ragnvald, and let him know how it stood with the Swedish king, and that

the agreement made with the king of Norway was broken; and advising the earl and people of West Gautland to be upon their guard, as no peace from the people of Norway was to be expected. When the earl got this news he sent a message through all his kingdom, and told the people to be cautious, and prepared in case of war or pillage from the side of Norway. He also sent men to King Olaf the Thick, and let him know the message he had received, and likewise that he wished for himself to hold peace and friendship with King Olaf; and therefore he begged him not to pillage in his kingdom. When this message came to King Olaf it made him both angry and sorry; and for some days nobody got a word from him. He then held a House-Thing with his men, and in it Biorn arose, and first took the word. He began his speech by telling that he had proceeded eastward last winter to establish a peace, and he told how kindly Earl Ragnvald had received him; and, on the other hand, how crossly and heavily the Swedish king had accepted the proposal. "And the agreement," said he, "which was made, was made more by means of the strength of the people, the power of Thorgny, and the aid of the earl, than by the king's good-will. Now, on these grounds, we know for certain that it is the king who has caused the breach of the agreement; therefore we ought by no means to make the earl suffer, for it is proved that he is King Olaf's firm friend." The king wished now to hear from the chiefs and other leaders of troops what course he should adopt. "Whether shall we

go against Gautland, and maraud there with such men as we have got; or is there any other course that appears to you more advisable?" He spoke both long and well.

Thereafter many powerful men spoke, and all were at last agreed in dissuading from hostilities. They argued thus:—"Although we are a numerous body of men who are assembled here, yet they are all only people of weight and power; but, for a war expedition, young men who are in quest of property and consideration are more suitable. It is also the custom of people of weight and power, when they go into battle or strife, to have many people with them whom they can send out before them for their defence; for the men do not fight worse who have little property, but even better than those who are brought up in the midst of wealth." After these considerations the king resolved to dismiss this army from any expedition, and to give every man leave to return home; but proclaimed, at the same time, that next summer the people over the whole country would be called out in a general levy, to march immediately against the Swedish king, and punish him for his want of faith. All thought well of this plan. Then the king returned northwards to Viken, and took his abode at Sarpsborg in autumn, and ordered all things necessary for winter provision to be collected there; and he remained there all winter [1019] with a great retinue.

CHAPTER XCII.—*Sigvat the Skald's Journey Eastwards.*

People talked variously about Earl Ragnvald; some said he was King Olaf's sincere friend; others did not think this likely, and thought it stood in his power to warn the Swedish king to keep his word, and the agreement concluded on between him and King Olaf. Sigvat the poet often expressed himself in conversation as Earl Ragnvald's great friend, and often spoke of him to King Olaf; and he offered to the king to travel to Earl Ragnvald's and spy after the Swedish king's doings, and to attempt, if possible, to get the settlement of the agreement. The king thought well of this plan; for he oft, and with pleasure, spoke to his confidential friends about Ingigerd, the king's daughter. Early in winter [1019] Sigvat the skald, with two companions, left Sarpsborg, and proceeded eastwards over the moors to Gautland. Before Sigvat and King Olaf parted he composed these verses:—

"Sit happy in thy hall, O king!
Till I come back, and good news bring:
The skald will bid thee now farewell,
Till he brings news well worth to tell.
He wishes to the helmed hero
Health, and long life, and a full flow
Of honour, riches, and success—
And, parting, ends his song with this.
The farewell word is spoken now—
The word that to the heart lies nearest;
And yet, O king! before I go,
One word on what I hold the dearest.
I fain would say, 'O! may God save
To thee, the bravest of the brave,
The land which is thy right by birth! —
This is my dearest wish on earth."

Then they proceeded eastwards towards Eid, and had difficulty in crossing the river in a little cobble; but they escaped, though with danger: and Sigvat sang:—

"On shore the crazy boat I drew,
Wet to the skin, and frightened too;
For truly there was danger then:
The mocking hill-elves laughed again,
To see us in this cobble sailing,
And all our sea-skill unavailing.
But better did it end, you see,
Than any of us could foresee."

Then they went through the Eid forest, and Sigvat sang:—

"A hundred miles through Eid's old wood,
And devil an alehouse, bad or good,—
A hundred miles, and tree and sky
Were all that met the weary eye.
With many a grumble, many a groan,
A hundred miles we trudged right on;
And every king's man of us bore
On each foot-sole a bleeding sore."

They came then through Gautland, and in the evening reached a farm-house called Hof. The door was bolted so that they could not come in; and the servants told them it was a fast-day, and they could not get admittance. Sigvat sang:—

"Now up to Hof in haste I hie,
And round the house and yard I pry.
Doors are fast locked—but yet within,
Methinks, I hear some stir and din.
I peep, with nose close to the ground,
Below the door, but small cheer found.
My trouble with few words was paid—
'Tis holy time,' the house-folks said.
Heathens! to shove me thus away!
I' the foul fiend's claws may you all lay."

Then they came to another farm, where the good-

wife was standing at the door, and told them not to come in, for they were busy with a sacrifice to the elves. Sigvat sang of it thus :—

"'My poor lad, enter not, I pray!'
Thus to me did the old wife say;
'For all of us are heathens here,
And I for Odin's wrath do fear.'
The ugly witch drove me away,
Like scared wolf sneaking from his prey,
When she told me that there within
Was sacrifice to foul Odin."

Another evening they came to three bondes, all of them of the name of Olver, who drove them away. Sigvat sang :—

"Three of one name,
To their great shame,
The traveller late
Drove from their gate!
Travellers may come
From our viking-home,
Unbidden guests
At these Olvers' feasts."

They went on farther that evening, and came to a fourth bonde, who was considered the most hospitable man in the country; but he drove them away also. Then Sigvat sang :—

"Then on I went to seek night's rest
From one who was said to be the best,
The kindest host in the land around,
And there I hoped to have quarters found.
But, faith, 'twas little use to try;
For not so much as raise an eye
Would this huge wielder of the spade:
If he's the best, it must be said
Bad is the best, and the skald's praise
Cannot be given to churls like these.
I almost wished that Asta's son
In the Eid forest had been one,
When we, his men, were even put
Lodging to crave in a heathen's hut.

I knew not where the earl to find;
Four times driven off by men unkind,
I wandered now the whole night o'er,
Driven like a dog from door to door."

Now when they came to Earl Ragnvald's the earl said they must have had a severe journey. Then Sigvat sang:—

"The message-bearers of the king
From Norway came his words to bring;
And truly for their master they
Hard work have done before to-day.
We did not loiter on the road,
But on we pushed for thy abode:
Thy folk, in sooth, were not so kind
That we cared much to lag behind.
But Eid forest safe we found,
From robbers free to the eastern bound:
This praise to thee, great earl, is due—
The skald says only what is true."

Earl Ragnvald gave Sigvat a gold arm-ring, and a woman said "he had not made the journey with his black eyes for nothing." Sigvat sang:—

"My coal-black eyes
Dost thou despise?
They have lighted me
Across the sea
To gain this golden prize:
They have lighted me,
Thy eyes to see,
O'er Iceland's main,
O'er hill and plain:
Where Nanna's lad would fear to be
They have lighted me."

Sigvat was long entertained kindly and well in the house of Earl Ragnvald. The earl heard by letters, sent by Ingigerd the king's daughter, that ambassadors from King Jarisleif were come from Russia to King Olaf of Svithiod to ask his daughter

Ingigerd in marriage, and that King Olaf had given them hopes that he would agree to it. About the same time King Olaf's daughter Astrid came to Earl Ragnvald's court, and a great feast was made for her. Sigvat soon became acquainted by conversation with the king's daughter, and she knew him by name and family, for Ottar the skald, Sigvat's sister's son, had long intimate acquaintance with King Olaf, the Swedish king. Among other things talked of, Earl Ragnvald asked Sigvat if the king of Norway would not marry the king's daughter Astrid. "If he would do that," said he, "I think we need not ask the Swedish king for his consent." Astrid, the king's daughter, said exactly the same. Soon after Sigvat returns home, and comes to King Olaf at Sarpsborg a little before Yule.

When Sigvat came home to King Olaf he went into the hall, and, looking around on the walls, he sang:—

"When our men their arms are taking
The raven's wings with greed are shaking;
When they come back to drink in hall
Brave spoil they bring to deck the wall—
Shields, helms, and panzers,* all in row,
Stripped in the field from lifeless foe.
In truth no royal hall comes near
Thy splendid hall in precious gear."

Afterwards Sigvat told of his journey, and sang these verses:—

"The king's court-guards desire to hear
About our journey and our cheer,

* The Pantzer—a complete suit of plate-armour—is a word we want in the English, but is used in the cognate German and Northern languages. —L.

Our ships in autumn reach the sound,
But long the way to Swedish ground.
With joyless weather, wind and rain,
And pinching cold, and feet in pain—
With sleep, fatigue, and want oppressed,
No songs had we—we scarce had rest."

And when he came into conversation with the king he sang:—

"When first I met the earl I told
How our king loved a friend so bold;
How in his heart he loved a man
With hand to do, and head to plan.
Thou generous king! with zeal and care
I sought to advance thy great affair;
For messengers from Russian land
Had come to ask Ingigerd's hand.
The earl, thy friend, bids thee, who art
So mild and generous of heart,
His servants all who here may come
To cherish in thy royal home;
And thine who may come to the east
In Ragnvald's hall shall find a feast—
In Ragnvald's house shall find a home—
At Ragnvald's court be still welcome.
When first I came the people's mind
Incensed by Eirik's son I find;
And he refused thy wish to meet,
Alleging treachery and deceit.
But I explained how it was here,
For earl and king, advantage clear
With thee to hold the strictest peace,
And make all force and foray cease.
The earl is wise, and understands
The need of peace for both the lands;
And he entreats thee not to break
The present peace for vengeance' sake!"

He immediately tells King Olaf the news he had heard; and at first the king was much cast down when he heard of King Jarisleif's suit, and he said he expected nothing but evil from King Olaf; but

wished he might be able to return it in such a way as Olaf should remember. A while afterwards the king asks Sigvat about various news from Gautland. Sigvat spoke a great deal about Astrid, the king's daughter; how beautiful she was, how agreeable in her conversation; and that all declared she was in no respect behind her sister Ingigerd. The king listened with pleasure to this. Then Sigvat told him the conversation he and Astrid had had between themselves, and the king was delighted at the idea. "The Swedish king," said he, "will scarcely think that I will dare to marry a daughter of his without his consent." But this speech of his was not known generally. King Olaf and Sigvat the skald often spoke about it. The king inquired particularly of Sigvat what he knew about Earl Ragnvald, and "if he be truly our friend," said the king. Sigvat said that the earl was King Olaf's best friend, and sang these verses:—

"The mighty Olaf should not cease
With him to hold good terms and peace;
For this good earl unwearied shows
He is thy friend where all are foes.
Of all who dwell by the East Sea
So friendly no man is as he:
At all their Things he takes thy part,
And is thy firm friend, hand and heart."

CHAPTER XCIII.—*Earl Ragnvald and Astrid's Journey to Norway.*

After Yule [1019], Thord Skotakol, a sister's son of Sigvat, attended by one of Sigvat's footboys, who had been with Sigvat the autumn before in

Gautland, went quite secretly from the court, and proceeded to Gautland. When they came to Earl Ragnvald's court, they produced the tokens which Olaf himself had sent to the earl, that he might place confidence in Thord. Without delay the earl made himself ready for a journey, as did Astrid, the king's daughter; and the earl took with him 120 men, who were chosen both from among his court-men and the sons of great bondes, and who were carefully equipped in all things, clothes, weapons, and horses. Then they rode northwards to Sarpsborg, and came there at Candlemas.

Chapter XCIV.—*Of King Olaf's Marriage.*

King Olaf had put all things in order in the best style. There were all sorts of liquors of the best that could be got, and all other preparations of the same quality. Many people of consequence were summoned in from their residences. When the earl arrived with his retinue the king received him particularly well; and the earl was shown to a large, good, and remarkably well-furnished house for his lodging; and serving-men and others were appointed to wait on him; and nothing was wanting, in any respect, that could grace a feast. Now when the entertainment had lasted some days, the king, the earl, and Astrid had a conference together; and the result of it was, that Earl Ragnvald contracted Astrid, daughter of the Swedish king Olaf, to Olaf king of Norway, with the same dowry which had before been

settled that her sister Ingigerd should have from home. King Olaf, on his part, should give Astrid the same bride-gift that had been intended for her sister Ingigerd. Thereupon an eke was made to the feast, and King Olaf and Queen Astrid's wedding was drunk in great festivity. Earl Ragnvald then returned to Gautland, and the king gave the earl many great and good gifts at parting; and they parted the dearest of friends, which they continued to be while they lived.

CHAPTER XCV.—*The Agreement with the King of Norway Broken by Olaf of Svithiod.*

The spring [1019] thereafter came ambassadors from King Jarisleif in Novgorod to Svithiod, to treat more particularly about the promise given by King Olaf the preceding summer to marry his daughter Ingigerd to King Jarisleif. King Olaf talked about the business with Ingigerd, and told her it was his pleasure that she should marry King Jarisleif. She replied, "If I marry King Jarisleif, I must have as my bride-gift the town and earldom of Ladoga." * The Russian ambassadors agreed to this, on the part of their sovereign. Then said Ingigerd, "If I go east to Russia, I must choose the man in Svithiod whom I think most suitable to accompany me; and I must stipulate that he shall not have any less title, or in any respect less dignity, privilege, and consideration there, than he has here." This the king

* Aldeigiuborg in the original.

and the ambassadors agreed to, and gave their hands upon it in confirmation of the condition.

"And who," asked the king, "is the man thou wilt take with thee as thy attendant?"

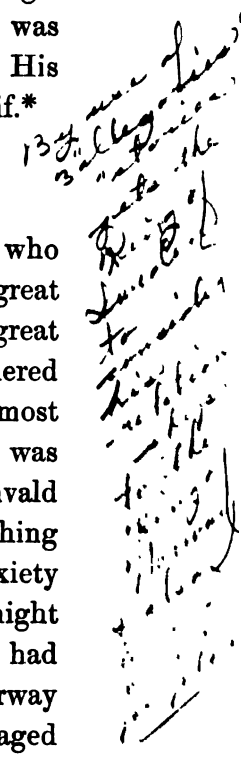
"That man," she replied, "is my relation Earl Ragnvald."

The king replies, "I have resolved to reward Earl Ragnvald in a different manner for his treason against his master in going to Norway with my daughter, and giving her as a concubine to that fellow, who he knew was my greatest enemy. I shall hang him up this summer."

Then Ingigerd begged her father to be true to the promise he had made her, and had confirmed by giving his hand upon it. By her entreaties it was at last agreed that the king should promise to let Earl Ragnvald go in peace from Svithiod, but that he should never again appear in the king's presence, or come back to Svithiod while Olaf reigned. Ingigerd then sent messengers to the earl to bring him these tidings, and to appoint a place of meeting. The earl immediately prepared for his journey; rode up to East Gautland; procured there a vessel, and, with his retinue, joined Ingigerd, and they proceeded together eastward to Russia. There Ingigerd was married to King Jarisleif; and their children were Valdemar, Vissivald, and Holte the Bold.* Queen

* Jarisleif was the son of Vladimir, who again was the great grandson of Rurik. In the year 1019 he won a victory over his brother Svjetopolk. In Nestor's *Chronicle* the following sons of Jarisleif are mentioned: Vladimir, born 1024; Svjetoslav, born 1027; Vsevolod, born 1030; Igor, and Vjesseslav. Holte is not mentioned by Nestor. Jarisleif died 1054, and his wife 1050.

Ingigerd gave Earl Ragnvald the town of Ladoga, and earldom belonging to it. Earl Ragnvald was there a long time, and was a celebrated man. His sons and Ingibjorg's were Earl Ulf and Earl Eilif.*



CHAPTER XCVI.—*History of the Lagman Emund.*

There was a man called Emund † of Skara, who was lagman of West Gautland, and was a man of great understanding and eloquence, and of high birth, great connection, and very wealthy; but was considered deceitful, and not to be trusted. He was the most powerful man in West Gautland after the earl was gone. The same spring [1019] that Earl Ragnvald left Gautland the Gautland people held a Thing among themselves, and often expressed their anxiety to each other about what the Swedish king might do. They heard he was incensed because they had rather held in friendship with the king of Norway than striven against him; and he was also enraged against those who had attended his daughter Astrid to Norway. Some proposed to seek help and support from the king of Norway, and to offer him their services; others dissuaded from this measure, as West Gautland had no strength to oppose to the Swedes. "And the king of Norway," said they, "is far from us, the chief strength of his country very distant;

* Ulf is not mentioned elsewhere in Norse documents. Eilif is mentioned again in Harald Hardrade's Saga, chapter 2. The *Flatey-bok* has a long account of another Norseman, by name Emund Ringson, who was for a long time in Jarisleif's court.

† This Emund is not mentioned in any other old saga, but Snorre may have learned this story about him when he visited lawman Eskil in West Gautland.

and therefore let us first send men to the Swedish king to attempt to come to some reconciliation with him. If that fail, we can still turn to the king of Norway." Then the bondes asked Emund to undertake this mission, to which he agreed; and he proceeded with thirty men to East Gautland, where there were many of his relations and friends, who received him hospitably. He conversed there with the most prudent men about this difficult business; and they were all unanimous on one point,—that the king's treatment of them was against law and reason. From thence Emund went into Svithiod,* and conversed with many men of consequence, who all expressed themselves in the same way. Emund continued his journey thus, until one day, towards evening, he arrived at Upsala, where he and his retinue took a good lodging, and stayed there all night. The next day Emund waited upon the king, who was just then sitting in the Thing surrounded by many people. Emund went before him, bent his knee, and saluted him. The king looked at him, saluted him, and asked him what news he brought.

Emund replies, "There is little news among us Gautlanders; but it appears to us a piece of remarkable news that the proud, stupid Atte, in Vermaland, whom we look upon as a great sportsman, went up to the forest in winter with his snow-shoes and his bow. After he had got as many furs in the mountains as filled his hand-sledge† so full that he

* Svithiod was only a part of what is now called Sweden.—L.

† A small sledge which people travelling on snow-skates drag after them with their provisions or clothes.—L.

could scarcely drag it, he returned home from the woods. But on the way he saw a squirrel in the trees, and shot at it, but did not hit; at which he was so angry, that he left the sledge to run after the squirrel: but still the squirrel sprang where the wood was thickest, sometimes among the roots of the trees, sometimes in the branches, sometimes among the arms that stretch from tree to tree. When Atte shot at it the arrows flew too high or too low, and the squirrel never jumped so that Atte could get a fair aim at him. He was so eager upon this chase that he ran the whole day after the squirrel, and yet could not get hold of it. It was now getting dark; so he threw himself down upon the snow, as he was wont, and lay there all night in a heavy snow-storm. Next day Atte got up to look after his sledge, but never did he find it again; and so he returned home. And this is the only news, king, I have to tell."

The king says, "This is news of but little importance, if it be all thou hast to tell."

Emund replies, "Lately something happened which may well be called news. Gaute Tofason went with five war-ships out of the Gaut river, and when he was lying at the Eikrey Isles there came five large Danish merchant-ships there. Gaute and his men immediately took four of the great vessels, and made a great booty without the loss of a man; but the fifth vessel slipped out to sea, and sailed away. Gaute gave chase with one ship, and at first came nearer to them; but as the wind increased, the Danes

got away. Then Gaute wanted to turn back; but a storm came on so that he lost his ship at Hlesey, with all the goods, and the greater part of his crew. In the meantime his people were waiting for him at the Eikrey Isles; but the Danes came over in fifteen merchant-ships, killed them all, and took all the booty they had made. So but little luck had they with their greed of plunder."

The king replied, "That is great news, and worth being told; but what now is thy errand here?"

Emund replies, "I travel, sire, to obtain your judgment in a difficult case, in which our law and the Upsala law do not agree."

The king asks, "What is thy appeal case?"

Emund replies, "There were two noble-born men of equal birth, but unequal in property and disposition. They quarrelled about some land, and did each other much damage; but most was done to him who was the more powerful of the two. This quarrel, however, was settled, and judged of at a General Thing; and the judgment was, that the most powerful should pay a compensation. But at the first payment, instead of paying a goose, he paid a gosling; for an old swine he paid a sucking pig; and for a mark of stamped gold only a half-mark, and for the other half-mark nothing but clay and dirt; and, moreover, threatened, in the most violent way, the people whom he forced to receive such goods in payment. Now, sire, what is your judgment?"

The king replies, "He shall pay the full equivalent

whom the judgment ordered to do so, and that faithfully; and further, threefold to his king: and if payment be not made within a year and a day, he shall be cut off from all his property, his goods confiscated, and half go the king's house, and half to the other party."

Emund took witnesses to this judgment * among the most considerable of the men who were present, according to the laws which were held in the Upsala Thing. He then saluted the king, and went his way; and other men brought their cases before the king, and he sat late in the day upon the cases of the people. Now when the king came to table, he asked where Lagman Emund was. It was answered, he was home at his lodgings. "Then," said the king, "go after him, and tell him to be my guest to-day." Thereafter the dishes were borne in; then came the musicians with harps, fiddles, and musical instruments; and lastly, the cup-bearers. The king was particularly merry, and had many great people at table with him, so that he thought little of Emund. The king drank the whole day, and slept all the night after; but in the morning the king awoke, and recollected what Emund had said the day before: and when he had put on his clothes, he let his wise men be summoned to him; for he had always twelve of the wisest men who sat in judgment with him, and treated the more difficult cases; and that was no

* Is the ceremony of taking witness by a token, or some solemn act, as of delivery of a piece of money (still used in Scotland), of feudal or of udal origin?—L.

easy business, for the king was ill-pleased if the judgment was not according to justice, and yet it was of no use to contradict him. In this meeting the king ordered Lagman Emund to be called before them. The messenger returned, and said, "Sire, Lagman Emund rode away yesterday as soon as he had dined." "Then," said the king, "tell me, ye good chiefs, what may have been the meaning of that law-case which Emund laid before us yesterday?"

They replied, "You must have considered it yourself, if you think there was any other meaning under it than what he said."

The king replied, "By the two noble-born men whom he spoke of, who were at variance, and of whom one was more powerful than the other, and who did each other damage, he must have meant us and Olaf the Thick."

They answered, "It is, sire, as you say."

The king—"Our case was judged at the Upsala Thing. But what was his meaning when he said that bad payment was made; namely, a gosling for a goose, a pig for a swine, and clay and dirt for half of the money instead of gold?"

Arnvid the Blind replied, "Sire, red gold and clay are things very unlike; but the difference is still greater between king and slave. You promised Olaf the Thick your daughter Ingigerd, who, in all branches of her descent, is born of kings, and of the Upland Swedish race of kings, which is the most noble in the North; for it is traced up to the gods themselves. But now Olaf has got Astrid; and

although she is a king's child, her mother was but a slave-woman, and, besides, of Vindish race. Great difference, indeed, must there be between these kings, when the one takes thankfully such a match; and now it is evident, as might be expected, that no Northman is to be placed by the side of the Upsala kings. Let us all give thanks that it has so turned out; for the gods have long protected their descendants, although many now neglect this faith."

There were three brothers:—Arnvid the Blind, who had a great understanding, but was so weak-sighted that he was scarcely fit for war; the second was Thorvid the Stammerer, who could not utter two words together at one time, but was remarkably bold and courageous; the third was Freyvid the Deaf, who was hard of hearing. All these brothers were rich and powerful men, of noble birth, great wisdom, and all very dear to the king.

Then said King Olaf, "What means that which Emund said about Atte the Dull?"

None made any reply, but the one looked at the other.

"Speak freely," said the king.

Then said Thorvid the Stammerer, "Atte—quarrelsome—greedy—jealous—deceitful—dull."

Then said the king, "To whom are these words of reproach and mockery applied?"

Freyvid the Deaf replied, "We will speak more clearly if we have your permission."

The king—"Speak freely, Freyvid, what you will."

Freyvid took up the word, and spoke. "My brother

Thorvid, who is considered to be the wisest of us brothers, holds the words 'quarrelsome, greedy, jealous, dull, to be one and the same thing; for it applies to him who is weary of peace, longs for small things without attaining them, while he lets great and useful things pass away as they came. I am deaf; yet so loud have many spoken out, that I can perceive that all men, both great and small, take it ill that you have not kept your promise to the king of Norway; and, worse than that, that you broke the decision of the community as it was delivered at Upsala Thing. You need not fear either the king of Norway, or the king of Denmark, or any other, so long as the Swedish army will follow you; but if the people of the country unanimously turn against you, we, your friends, see no counsel that can be of advantage to you."

The king asks, "Who is the chief who dares to betray the country and me?"

Freyvid replies, "All Swedes desire to have the ancient laws, and their full rights. Look but here, sire, how many chiefs are sitting in council with you. I think, in truth, we are but six whom you call your councillors: all the others, so far as I know, have ridden forth through the districts to hold Things with the people; and we will not conceal it from you, that the message-token has gone forth to assemble a Retribution-thing.* All of us brothers have been invited to take part in the decisions of this council, but none of us will bear the

* Refsithing—a Thing for punishment by penalty or death for crimes and misdemeanours.—L.

name of traitor to the sovereign; for that our father never was."

Then the king said, "What council shall we take in this dangerous affair that is in our hands? Good chiefs give me council, that I may keep my kingdom, and the heritage of my forefathers; for I cannot enter into strife against the whole Swedish force."

Arnvid the Blind replies, "Sire, it is my advice that you ride down to Aros* with such men as will follow you; take your ship there, and go out into the Mælar lake; summon all people to meet you; proceed no longer with haughtiness, but promise every man the law and rights of old established in the country; keep back in this way the message-token, for it cannot as yet, in so short a time, have travelled far through the land. Send, then, those of your men in whom you have the most confidence to those who have this business on hand, and try if this uproar can be appeased."

The king says that he will adopt this advice. "I will," says he, "that ye brothers undertake this business; for I trust to you the most among my men."

Thorvid the Stammerer said, "I remain behind. Let Jacob, your son, go with them, for that is necessary."

Then said Freyvid, "Let us do as Thorvid says: he will not leave you, and I and Arnvid must travel."

* Aros—the river-mouth; probably Westerås, on the Mælar lake.—L.

This counsel was followed. Olaf went to his ships, and set out into the Mælar lake, and many people came to him. The brothers Arnvid and Freyvid rode out to Ullaraker, and had with them the king's son Jacob; but they kept it a secret that he was there. The brothers observed that there was a great concourse and war-gathering, for the bondes held the Thing night and day. When Arnvid and Freyvid met their relations and friends, they said they would join with the people; and many agreed to leave the management of the business in the hands of the brothers. But all, as one man, declared they would no longer have King Olaf over them, and no longer suffer his unlawful proceedings, and over-weening pride which would not listen to any man's remonstrances, even when the great chiefs spoke the truth to him. When Freyvid observed the heat of the people, he saw in what a bad situation the king's cause was. He summoned the chiefs of the land to a meeting with him, and addressed them thus:—"It appears to me, that if we are to depose Olaf Eirikson from his kingdom, we Swedes of the Uplands should be the leading men in it; for so it has always been, that the counsel which the Upland chiefs have resolved upon among themselves has always been followed by the men of the rest of the country. Our forefathers did not need to take advice from the West Gautlanders about the govern-ment of the Swedes. Now we will not be so de-generate as to need Emund to give us counsel; but let us, friends and relations, unite ourselves for the

